

THE INDEPENDENT

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(IR70p) 70p

32-PAGE NEWS SECTION



Steffi Graf bows out

WITH 12 PAGES OF SPORT

32-PAGE BROADSHEET REVIEW



Steadman on Blair's blues

COMMENT, WEEKEND REVIEW

72-PAGE MAGAZINE



The Indian spice boys

BIG AND BANNED IN BOMBAY

Ulster results deal blow to Trimble

THE PROSPECT OF SUCCESS for the entire Irish peace process has been endangered by a critical fall in support for David Trimble's Ulster Unionist Party in the elections for the new assembly.

The results showed that Northern Ireland's political landscape was undergoing serious upheaval. With counting continuing last night, the Unionist party seemed on the point of losing its traditional position as the largest political grouping to John Hume's nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party.

As Mr Trimble's vote

BY DAVID MCKITTRICK
Ireland Correspondent

dropped, support for the Rev Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists was on the rise - indicating that the new assembly will contain a strong body of Unionist critics of the new approach laid out in the Good Friday agreement.

This means that Mr Trimble, as the agreement's principal advocate within the assembly, will be dogged by Paisleyite criticisms and attempts to sabotage the agreement's provisions for establishing new north-south links.

Television warfare broke out within the Unionist party yesterday, with the Trimble loyalist Ken Maginnis accusing his parliamentary colleague Jeffrey Donaldson of betraying the party through his lack of support for the agreement. Mr Donaldson responded that Mr Maginnis "should hang his head in shame" for his role in the party's poorest election showing in years.

Mr Paisley's successes were augmented in many constituencies by strong showings from anti-Timble Unionists. The pattern seemed to confirm Mr Paisley's claims that recent

weeks had seen a significant shift of Protestant voters who voted "yes" in last month's referendum into the anti-agreement camp.

The election confirmed that the pattern seen in recent years of fracturing within Unionism had continued and even worsened. This process, together with an apparently higher turnout on the nationalist side, has enabled the SDLP to challenge the Ulster Unionists' traditional supremacy.

The divisions within the UUP were on open display even before yesterday, thus probably alienating many of

its traditional supporters. Mr Trimble said: "There are problems and clearly those problems have had an effect on this election, but I think we'll leave the post-mortems until everything is complete."

Mr Donaldson said of Mr Maginnis: "He has presided over one of the biggest electoral disasters for the Ulster Unionist Party in recent years. He should not be pointing the finger at anybody ..."

"People deserved the Ulster Unionists in their droves and if you want to unite a party, you have got to give both sides of the argument their place. A

majority of the party voted for the agreement, but time will prove them wrong."

Mr Maginnis retorted: "He gloated over the difficulties he and others like him created in the party and I am sad, rather than angry about what has happened."

In his North Antrim constituency, where he made a strong personal showing, Mr Paisley rejoiced: "People have awakened to see this is a pan-nationalist agreement that has to be brought to a standstill. It is what we intend to do to save the Union. The majority of Unionists who will be in the as-

sembly are those who said 'no'. We are not in the wrecking business. We are going to save the Union."

"Dublin is sick. Tony Blair is sick and the sickest man of all is David Trimble. He is sickened unto death because today the people of Northern Ireland wrote the obituary notice of Trimbleism. I believe it is the end of his leadership of anything in Northern Ireland."

Gerry Adams yesterday became one of the first members to be elected to the assembly. The Sinn Fein president topped the poll in West Belfast, and along with Joe Hendron

(SDLP), and the DUP's Gregory Campbell (East Londonderry), became the first winners of the 108 seats.

Mr Adams said: "We went to the electorate having sought a mandate in the forum election to negotiate; we received that; we negotiated. We now have to implement that. People want to see me and others taking our place in the institutions."

I think the work in the days and weeks ahead is to put all of those structures - cross-border bodies, ministers, the executive - into place..."

John Hume profile
Review, page 5

Ten arrested as hundreds of English supporters clash with French riot police near World Cup stadium at Lens



England fans taunting police on the streets of Lille hours before last night's match against Colombia in Lens

Peter Macdiarmid

More violence mars big match

BY ANDREW BUNCOMBE
in Lille

RENEWED VIOLENCE and clashes between England football supporters and French police broke out yesterday in advance of England's vital World Cup fixture last night.

In Lens, where England played Colombia, there were about 10 arrests after hundreds of supporters were involved in disturbances with police close to the Félix Bollaert Stadium.

In Lille, about 25 miles away, there were also arrests as trouble erupted in the afternoon around the main railway station, a stopping point for the Eurostar. About 60 fans were involved in a number of glass-throwing incidents until riot police moved in to empty the bars around the station. At one point about 150 police, armed with tear gas and guns, sealed off the station.

The trouble yesterday afternoon followed skirmishes and violence in the early hours. The worst incident took place in the Belgian port of Ostend where 57 England supporters were arrested after running riot through the town. Another 28 were arrested in the capital, Brussels. Last night those arrested were awaiting expulsion to Britain while two were still being questioned by police.

At one point police dogs and water cannon were used to try and control the supporters during the violence in Ostend, which lasted for more than three hours. The supporters had arrived by Hovercraft and were due to be returned by the same means but the Hovercraft company, HoverSpeed, last night denied there had been problems earlier in the day.

ing got drunk proceeded to cause trouble in the town."

At the same time as violence flared in Belgium there were about 40 arrests in Lille and Lens, mostly for drunken behaviour. Two "category C" hooligans arrested in Lille were expelled on Thursday night and a further three arrested were still being processed.

Yesterday afternoon's trouble appeared to involve only a small number of the 35,000 England supporters estimated to have arrived at Lens and Lille, most of whom did not have tickets for the game.

In Lens, about 300 chanting supporters were involved in violent scenes when up to 200 police came under a hail of bottles. In Lille, about 50 supporters threw glass at police and journalists after a day during which most had spent their time in bars drinking.

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Britain's new boom industry - lame excuses



ECONOMISTS MAY be divided about whether Britain is drifting into recession, but one business is enjoying an unmistakable and unprecedented boom. The manufacture of ludicrous excuses for falling sales is beating all production records as company bosses try to explain plummeting profits to investors.

Following the pioneering work by British Rail (remember the wrong type of snow?), some of our most prominent cap-

BY JOHN WILLCOCK

tains of industry are churning out world-beating lines faster than you can say: "The dog ate my homework, Sir."

Retailers are in the vanguard. Take Allied Carpets. Ray Nethercott, their managing director, was forced to issue a warning about why they were not shifting their rugs, declaring that: "We are just not getting the customers into the stores." Shaken by lingering

doubts about the reasons for the poor performance of his company, Mr Nethercott did go that extra mile for the Great British Excuse and came up with a subsidiary reason - freak flooding over Easter, although one might suspect that carpets would be the first thing that drenched home owners might have to replace. No matter. Allied Carpets has many allies as it strives for the perfect alibi.

Sir Graham Kirkham, chief executive of DFS, the furniture

chain, raised eyebrows when he blamed a series of one-off factors for poor sales. Having issued a warning in early March, he shocked shareholders with an even gloomier warning six weeks later, when he had to announce the first fall in profits for 28 years.

Instead of pointing to plausible factors such as the hikes in interest rates, Sir Graham blamed the hot weather in August last year, the death of Diana, Princess of Wales; the

deadline for self-assessment tax forms on 31 January, and finally, Easter flooding (where have we heard that before?) and snow.

We may not have the world-class industries that we used to boast, and the ones we still have we no longer own.

But the secret of the British has always been their ingenuity. When it comes to lame excuses, our industrialists are no lame ducks, and can still beat the world.

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Sinking feeling at Glastonbury

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Sketchley, the troubled dry-cleaning and business services group, signalled an end to its high street presence with the sale of its 620 outlets for just £1.23m. Page 18

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LTCB, the struggling Japanese bank, looks set to merge with one of its rivals in an attempt to stave off bankruptcy. Page 19

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Bernie Ecclestone, the man who runs Formula One, defended Michael Schumacher's aggressive driving style. Page 26

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Argentina went through to the second phase of the World Cup with a perfect nine points from three games and no goals conceded. Page 28

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Fergal Keane

'Start with a history marked out in repression and dispossession, add hunger, poverty and sexual repression and you get some idea of where we were coming from.' Page 3

Howard Jacobson

'In the good old days, when all our lunchboxes were as full and unreliable as a Virgin train, we expected High Court Judges to show ignorance of popular people and their appetencies.' Page 5

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World Cup: Fans are turned back for taking a softball bat (and a frisbee) to France



Their French holiday over before it began, football fans (from left) Kai Rahaman, Duncan Eaton and Simon Sadie unpack the car back in London Andrew Buurman

Thugs. Do they mean us?

WHEN DUNCAN Eaton, a football fan, packed a softball bat for his beach holiday in France, he was hoping for a home run, not a run home.

Unfortunately, thanks to the English reputation for World Cup hooliganism, a swift return to Britain is what he got. When over-zealous French immigration officials found the bat in his luggage yesterday – along with tennis racquets and balls, frisbees, a football and our softball bat.

He and his friends, who all had official England Travel Club tickets, intended to board the Shuttle before travelling to the match and joining two others for a week's holiday in the south of France.

The two other friends, who were not going to the football, had been allowed through by the officials. But once Mr Eaton and his friends said they had tickets for the game, their car was immediately searched.

BY STEVE BOGGAN

advertising media director, and Kai Rahaman, 29, a systems accountant at Channel 5, when he was stopped for routine questioning at Folkestone.

He and his friends, who all had official England Travel Club tickets, intended to board the Shuttle before travelling to the match and joining two others for a week's holiday in the south of France.

The two other friends, who were not going to the football, had been allowed through by the officials. But once Mr Eaton and his friends said they had tickets for the game, their car was immediately searched.

"We were quite happy to explain what we were up to and that we were bona fide supporters," said Mr Eaton. "The official opened the boot and he showed me all our bags and a duvet and all sorts of rubbish."

And then he saw our sporting gear – tennis racquets and balls, frisbees, a football and our softball bat.

"Then he held it up and said: 'Why are you taking this to a football match in France?' And suddenly my heart sank. He thought we were hooligans."

Mr Eaton was questioned at length by several French officials (there is a reciprocal agreement whereby English immigration officials are based

on the French side of the Channel Tunnel) and eventually handed a piece of paper to sign.

"They didn't speak much English and I don't speak much French," he said. "But I offered to leave the bat and even leave the tickets, just so I could salvage my holiday, but they wouldn't have it."

"Eventually, they said I had to sign the piece of paper. It was in French but I could make it out as saying we had been refused entry to France on suspicion of causing disorder and we wouldn't be allowed entry for 14 days. One official even had the cheek to ask me how to spell 'baseball bat'."

Mr Sadie watched the drama unfold from the passenger seat. "We had been so excited, but as soon as he picked up the softball bat I just thought 'Oh, God, no. What must that look like?'"

"We are the most unlikely football hooligans and we didn't have any football shirts or scarves, but they didn't care. I can understand why it must have looked to them but we were just so helpless. It just shows how the actions of real thugs are affecting all our reputations abroad."

Laurent Lernachard, the deputy press consul at the French embassy in London, was not unsympathetic to the fans' plight – but he added that

he considered their actions a little silly. "This is probably the worst day of the year to try to take a baseball bat into France," he said. "The immigration police evaluate the evidence available to them and make their own decision. There is nothing we can do to change it." He said that the men had been given the reasons in writing and had signed them.

Mr Eaton and his friends point out that those reasons were in French and they had been told they could not leave until they had signed. "Their behaviour is ridiculous," said Mr Sadie. "It is another example of the French not playing ball with the English."

Fans defy alcohol banBY JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

that the authorities had learned from the previous games. About 150 drunken fans were plucked from the Eurostar in Waterloo station yesterday and dozens of similarly inebriated men were stopped from taking ferries or crossing the Belgian border.

But it was clear from the England fans seen drinking on the streets of Lens in northern France – also appeared to have caught the authorities on the hop.

Attempts to prevent supporters becoming drunk by imposing a 24-hour alcohol ban on the town proved wildly optimistic as fans stocked up before arriving for the match.

Once again questions were being asked as to why British National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) spotters and the French police were unable to predict and prevent a repeat of the violent scenes in Marseilles last week.

"You have to look at it in wider terms. It is linked to the British phenomenon of drinking to excess. You just have to look at the men who were chucking rocks while wearing Sun hats to realise that it is a cultural thing – it is not just about football."

Intelligence sources insisted

countries can provide as much intelligence as they like, but the majority of it is to do with the British attitude to drink. It also assumes that the hooligans are all on a list in the first place, which is just not the case. Not everyone can be stopped from going along abroad."

He added that French baton charges and incompetent policing of the English supporters next to Tunisian followers on the beach in Marseilles had exacerbated the problem there.

The British courts have just started to use their powers to impose restriction orders on convicted hooligans, but only 70 thugs have had banning orders placed on them to prevent them from going to the World Cup. This leaves hundreds of other men, determined to get drunk and cause mayhem, able to travel across the Channel.

Unlike in the 1990 World Cup in Italy, the police in France have been prepared to use intelligence when provided with it, although some observers believe they missed a chance to give a red card to the English fans in

Marseilles by not charging in at the first sign of trouble.

Throughout the tournament, French police appear to have been unsure of how to deal with the English fans.

Following the street fights and baton charges in Marseilles, the French police made pre-emptive strikes by taking out known hooligans. The shock of being dumped into a French jail or deported seemed to help quell thoughts of disorder.

But the truce could not hold, as scenes in Lens yesterday proved. Some 200 riot police came under a hail of bottles and cans from a crowd of 300 fans.

With five hours still to go before the kick-off, police charged the crowd to disperse it.

A NCIS spokesman said:

"You have a very large number of people from England who got there with a belly full of alcohol and a xenophobic attitude."

"They have gone to cause trouble rather than watch football. Lens was always identified as the most likely trouble spot, but it is impossible to stop thousands of people travelling."

Dodd arrested on ferry to France

Dodd: arrested on ferry

ONE OF England's most feared football hooligans was arrested yesterday on a ferry about to leave Dover for France, it was disclosed last night.

Notorious hooligan Paul Dodd, 27, from Carlisle, and an 18-year-old from Barnsley, who has not been named, were held by Port of Dover Police in connection with an allegation of theft on board a P&O ferry, the Pride of Burgundy.

He has three lions tattooed on his chest with the slogan "No Surrender" and has already promised revenge on the people of Marseille if England make it to the quarter finals.

A spokesman for the Dover police confirmed that he was being questioned in connection with an alleged theft on board the ship. Dodd became known as Britain's most feared hooligan after he was banned from every football league ground in Britain.

Earlier this month, just before the start of the World Cup tournament, his book, called *Serial Adventures of a Soccer Hooligan*, was published. Dodd – a member of the hooligan outfit Carlisle's Border City Firm – has more than 30 convictions. In 1995, he was arrested after being involved in a riot in Dublin when England played Ireland. Last October, he was held by Italian police after attacking two men on his way to England's World Cup qualifier in Rome.

Noon today

BRITAIN TODAY

OUTLOOK

East, Anglia and south-east England will start dull with the remnants of overnight rain. It will soon brighten up with sunny spells and occasional heavy showers. Wales and the rest of England will also have sunshine and showers. Some of the showers will be heavy and locally thunder, although some south-western coasts may stay dry. Meanwhile, Scotland and Northern Ireland will be rather cool with heavy and prolonged showers, but there will also be a few sunny intervals.

NEXT FEW DAYS

Sunshine and showers will affect most places tomorrow, although south-western areas will have fewer showers and better sunny breaks. On Monday, Scotland and Northern Ireland will cool with sunny spells and a showers. England and Wales will start largely fine, but rain will spread in from the south-west later in the day. This rain will move slowly across southern Britain on Tuesday, leaving the north mostly dry and bright.

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Source: The Met Office. Call charge: 30p per min (inc VAT).

LIGHTING UP TIMES

	AM	HT	PM	HT
Belfast	21.03	to	4.47	
Birmingham	21.31	to	4.53	
Glasgow	22.06	to	4.31	
London	21.21	to	4.43	
Manchester	21.42	to	4.40	
Newcastle	21.49	to	4.37	
Nottingham	21.34	to	4.39	

HIGH TIDES

	London	HT	Paris	HT
London	11.06	6.7	23.27	8.8
Liverpool	08.20	8.5	21.00	8.5
Awaymouth	04.02	11.5	18.35	11.5
Hull (P&O) 03.25	7.8			

Jews in decline: Assimilation and emigration mean numbers have dropped below 300,000 for the first time this century

Britain's disappearing tribe



Friends and relatives of a 13-year-old boy celebrate his bar mitzvah. Emigration and assimilation are reducing the number of Jews in Britain

Miriam Reik/Formal

BY DARIUS SANAI

IT IS A situation any member of the Jewish community will dread. For the first time in more than 70 years, the number of Jewish people in Britain has dropped below 300,000, and is set to fall steadily. If the decline continues, numbers are projected to drop to below 200,000 within a generation and nobody seems sure how to reverse the trend.

The figures, compiled by the Board of Deputies of British Jews and published in yesterday's *Jewish Chronicle*, are particularly alarming in the provinces: Leeds, Glasgow, Birmingham and Southend all reported sharp losses between 1985 and 1986, the year for which the figures were compiled.

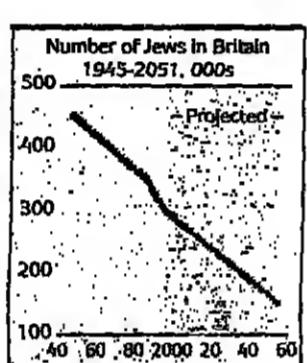
Nationally, the number of Jewish people is dropping by 2,300 every year; the country

has 285,000 Jewish residents, down from 308,000 10 years ago. Even the South-east, home to the vast majority of the Jewish population, is suffering a haemorrhage of 5 per cent every decade.

Ostensibly the figures make for frightening reading for anyone aware of the contribution of the Jewish population to British society over the centuries.

A word of caution was sounded by Marlene Schmoel, director of the Community Research Unit at the Board of Deputies, who said that "by concentrating on quantity, you lose sight of the qualitative changes, and they are not all that bad."

Other Jewish leading lights also pointed out that the figures were less a sudden drop than a continuation of a trend. Emigration, assimilation and secularisation have been constantly



strictly limited to the missionary) in what many interpreted as an attempt to avoid a further warning of those who wanted to be bound by Jewish tradition.

But behind the debate over the statistics lies a fundamental split which reformers in the Jewish community believe many of their fellow-Jews are avoiding to the long-term cost of the community. For the primary reason for the decline in the Jewish population is not migration, but assimilation.

Emigration to Israel, a source of diminishing numbers across Europe, accounts for about 800 people a year. Emigration strikes a double-whammy: those who leave for the Promised Land are, on the whole, the most devout and energetic, and thus the least likely to have become assimilated in the future. And they also tend to be young: either newly-

formed families or single people in their twenties.

With their zeal likely to be passed to their children, Rabbi Jonathan Romain, of Maidenhead Reform Synagogue, said: "Israel's gain in these cases is our loss."

But emigration isn't the primary source of attrition. There are an equal number of Jews estimated to leave for the other promised land - the United States. But by most estimates they are replaced by an equal number of new immigrants from across the world.

But the main sources of drainage are "assimilation" and "secularisation", processes which the Orthodox community, by far the dominant one in Britain, has traditionally countered with calls for greater education for children. This isn't working, and education has no effect on those above 20.

Some 44 per cent of Jewish males in Britain are estimated to be married to gentiles, meaning almost one in two Jews is unable to be accepted by the Orthodox synagogue, which frowns on inter-marriage, and is unlikely to bring up children who are Jewish, something which bodes ill for the future in a world where racial diversity is on an unstoppable increase.

Many reformers, however, believe that "assimilation" is a misnomer; that many of those who are counted as being assimilated are reluctant castaways, and that they would have remained part of the community if they had been given the chance.

Rabbi Romain, who is a historian of British Jewry and self-proclaimed reformer, says Judaism must change with the times or risk "much bigger problems" in the future.

'We're losing the young' because we fail to reach out'

BY ESTHER LEACH

LAWRENCE GORSDEN, a kosher baker and synagogue warden, had no doubts about the reason for the fall in the number of Jewish families living in the suburbs of Leeds. The rabbis, he said, were failing to reach out to them.

"They are not doing their job correctly," he said as he prepared dough for the sabbath.

"It is an easy get-out to blame the problem on assimilation and inter-marriage. We have three ministers in Leeds and they are not going out to the fringes of the community and welcoming new faces."

Mr Gorsden, 59, who was born in Leeds, was not surprised by the news that the number of Jewish people in Britain had fallen below 300,000 for the first time since the turn of the century, according to figures released by Board of Deputies of British Jews.

In Leeds, numbers have fallen by 17 per cent from 12,000 to 10,000. Mr Gorsden, a baker for 20 years in the Moortown area of the city, can see the drift away in population reflected in sales of his bread.

"This time 10 years ago I was selling 5,000 loaves of bread; now it is about 2,500. It is nothing to do with assimilation or low birth rate, it is the inability to bring families into the community."

"We have discussed this problem at our own synagogue, the United Hebrew Congregation, and now any stranger who comes in is made welcome immediately. We have now got 12 new families who are members."

People, he added, were also moving away to places like London because it had more to offer: "We do not for example have a Jewish high school. The parents may stay but the young people will move away."

Peter Myers, owner of a kosher delicatessen, said many families were now making their lives in Israel or the US. He need only scan his books of

customer accounts over the last 10 years to see how many families have left.

"Of course, it is a cause for concern," he said. "Many of the young people go away to university and then just disappear. Families move away because there is no high school, although there is a move to set one up."

Dr Anthony Gilbert, registrar of the Rabbinical Courts (Beth Din) said he did not believe the figures were accurate because they were based only on membership of Jewish burial societies and not all Jews belonged to them.

He added: "They don't take into account the numbers scattered outside the main areas of the Jewish population in



Gorsden: 'An easy get-out'

Leeds. We know they are there because of the response to advertisements for events such as Passover."

It is mainly areas outside London, such as Leeds' and Glasgow, which have suffered the greatest decline - with British Jewry concentrated in the capital more than ever before, according to the figures.

The Institute for Jewish Policy Research gave the reasons as assimilation, a low birth rate, inter-marriage and people no longer formally identifying themselves with the religion by joining organisations where they would be counted as Jews.

It's better in Israel, say Victor and Caroline from Hendon

BY ERIC SILVER
in Jerusalem

The Osteins are modern Orthodox Jews, graduates of a religious Zionist youth movement. They live there between school and university and say they always intended to return for both religious and historic reasons.

"It is easy enough nowadays to be a religious Jew in Hendon or Golders Green," Mr Ostein said. "But being a religious Jew has a lot more meaning when you're actually living in the land where the Torah was meant to be kept... This is not the only place to be a Jew, but it is the authentic place."

Then there's the historical perspective. "Israel represents an opportunity Jews haven't had for the last 2,000 years," he

said. "The opportunity to live in their own land. I for one, and my wife, feel we have to seize that opportunity and make the most of it."

The Osteins, who have been married for four years insist they didn't move out of blind faith. Mrs Ostein said: "Of course there are apprehensions. I don't believe anybody wants to bring up children and send them to the army. You hope and pray that there's going to be peace."

As for the continuing tensions, she said: "In some ways, it's harder being in England and watching everything on CNN, as we did in the Gulf War. Here you feel you're part of it. Everybody is going through the same thing. You get a lot of strength from that. You can cope with it."

"What's disheartening," he said, "is the way people behave towards each other: the dreadful level of political debate."

However, he does not have any plans to return to England. "It's this thing of being in a Jewish country," he said. "It's the only one we've got."

El Nino blows its way out

BY CHARLES ARTHUR
Technology Editor

and that indicates less heat stored in the ocean - a colder ocean.

This year's El Nino has been the strongest ever recorded, and blamed for record rain in California and tornadoes in the southeast US, flooding in Peru, drought and fires in Indonesia, and general unsettled - and frequently wet - weather around much of the world.

In Britain, the winter was unusually mild, but Easter

brought record floods to many parts of the country.

El Nino - Spanish for "boy child" - is caused when the westward trade winds across the Pacific weaken, and a huge mass of warm water which normally lies off Australia moves east along the Equator until it reaches the coast of South America.

The warm water affects ocean evaporation, allowing more rain clouds to form and also affects the jet stream which moves around the world at high altitude from west to

east. But now that it is dissipating, conditions could return to normal - or even flip over to its counterpart, "La Niña", which would mean drier air in the circulating weather systems.

"The effects of El Nino will remain in the climate system for a long time," said Dr Bill Patzert, a research oceanographer at Nasa. "However, if the Pacific is transitioning to a La Niña, we'd expect to see clear, strong indication of it in August or September - just like we did last year with El Nino."

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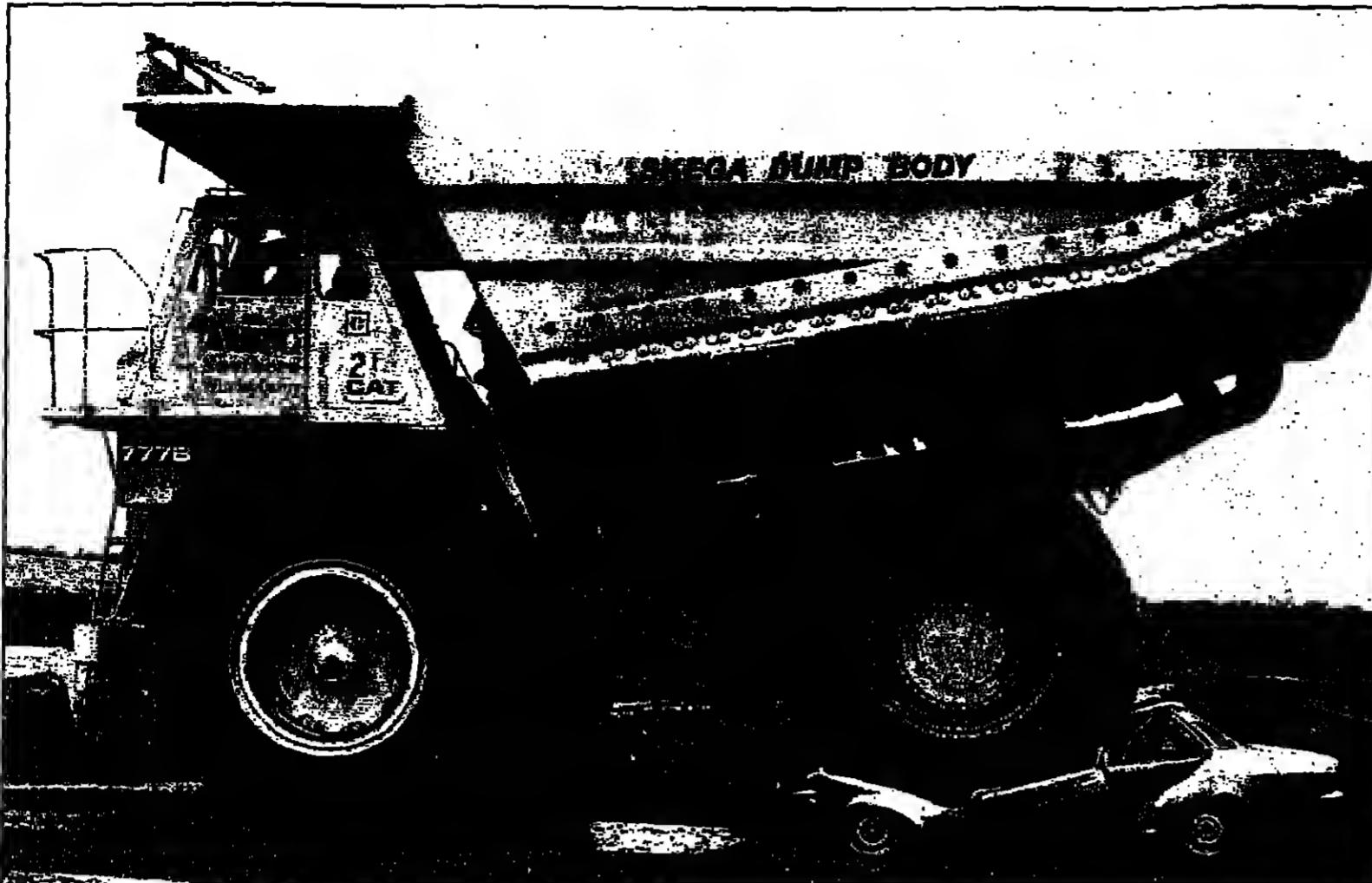
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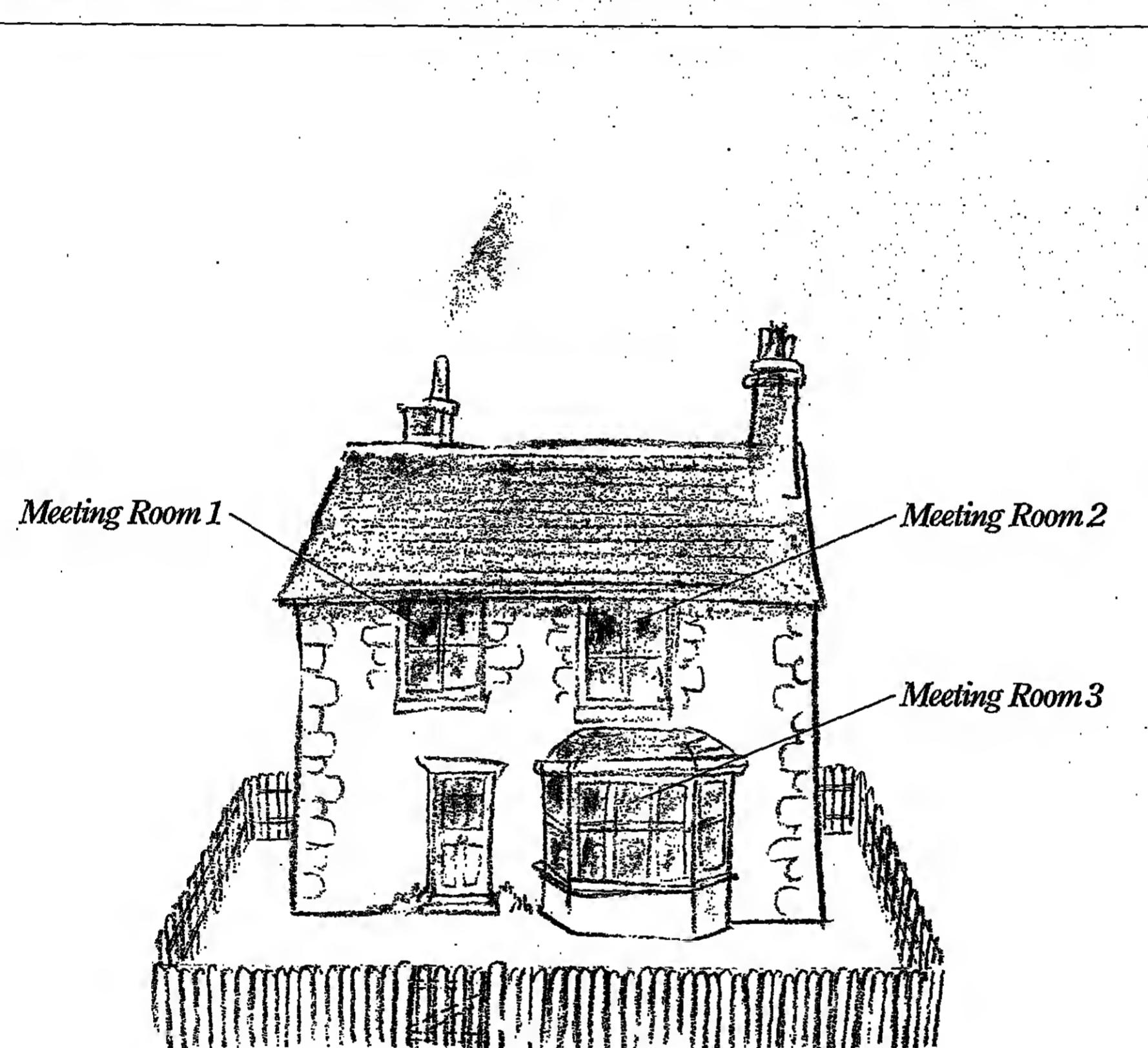


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The Health and Safety Executive, launching plans for new quarry legislation, shows the danger of the dumper at Whatley, Somerset. Ted Bath



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Inmates go on rampage at child jail

By IAN BURSELL
Home Affairs Correspondent

RIOT POLICE with dogs have been called to quell serious disorder at Britain's first child jail, only two months after it opened.

A group of nine children, aged 12-14, went on the rampage, smashing windows, and pelting staff with pool balls. Two boys and a girl, all aged 14, were taken into police custody and three staff were injured.

The disorder at Medway Secure Training Centre (STC) in Kent is a major embarrassment for Group 4, which runs the centre through a subsidiary company, and threatens to undermine the Government's policy for dealing with persistent

child offenders. Just 15 children are currently held at Medway at a per capita cost of £2,400 a week. Although the centre only opened in April, its head of care, Mike Hale, has already signalled his intention to leave.

Last week, Norman Warner, senior policy adviser to the Home Secretary Jack Straw, announced that the Government was so impressed with the centre that it was planning a massive expansion of such institutions.

The disorder at Medway broke out at 8pm on Thursday when five youngsters began smashing up the accommodation block that they share with two members of staff. A closed circuit television camera was damaged along with other fixtures and fittings and several windows were smashed.

The children then burst out into the courtyard - a landscaped garden designed to look like a village green - and taunted staff who pleaded with them to calm down.

Four other children, who had been allowed into the centre's games area in return for their previous good behaviour, rushed out to join the other five, snatching balls from the pool table and hurling them at staff. The youngsters then ran to the education block and began smashing the windows.

Police were called and more than 30 officers, wearing riot equipment, restored order by 10pm. Kent police said it was "entirely possible" that more children would be arrested as investigations continued.

A spokesman for Rebound ECD (Education, Care, Discipline), a subsidiary of Group 4 Security, said it was a "shocking incident" and condemned the children's "violent, abusive and hooligan behaviour". The centre has 100 staff, although

the spokesman would not say how many were on duty during the disorder. He said the children did not appear to have a particular grievance.

Medway is the first of five planned STCs, proposed by the then home secretary, Michael Howard, in 1993. They were condemned by Labour while in opposition as "colleges of crime" and have been widely criticised by penal reform groups.

Frances Crook, director of the Howard League, called yesterday for Medway to be "closed down forthwith and the children sent somewhere safe". She said it was appalling that social services' child protection teams were not allowed on to the site unless invited by Group 4.

Stephen Shaw, director of the Prison Reform Trust, said the violence should be the subject of a public inquiry, while Harry Fletcher, of the National Association of Probation Officers, said that more violence was likely to occur.

The Home Office said the disorder was an internal matter for Group 4. "It's a significant incident but not a serious, major incident," said a spokesman. "It has been described as a riot but nine kids is not a riot."

The children at Medway are held under Secure Training Orders, which detain them for between three months and a year, with an equivalent period spent after release under supervision in the community.

To be sent to the centre, children must have committed three imprisonable offences and have breached a supervision order. Before the centre opened it was impossible to detain such young children unless they had committed serious crimes such as rape or murder.

The next STCs are due to open at Oakley in Northamptonshire and Medomsley in County Durham.

Priest admits 15 child-sex charges

A ROMAN CATHOLIC priest yesterday appeared in court and admitted 12 indecent assaults on boys under 16 and three charges of indecency with a child.

Father David Crowley, 44, committed the offences while he worked in West Yorkshire and Devon between June 1981 and August 1992. Crowley was suspended by the Bishop of Leeds, the Rt Rev David Constant, who said he had betrayed the diocese.

"Along with all Catholics I am saddened and distressed that such shameful actions were committed by a priest," the bishop said. "We extend our

deep sympathy to the young people affected and to their families.

"The interests of children and young people are paramount to us and it is inexcusable that someone who was in a position of trust should cause hurt."

"The people of the diocese have every right to expect a high standard of pastoral care. Now they justifiably believe their trust was betrayed."

Sentencing of Crowley, who was a priest at St Joseph's Church, Little Horton, Bradford, was adjourned at Bradford Crown Court to a date to be fixed.

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More hunts in fox-breeding scandal



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FURTHER EVIDENCE emerged yesterday that fox-hunts around the country are using artificial breeding dens for foxes.

The League Against Cruel Sports claimed it could identify 32 hunts, including the Beaufort, which is favoured by Prince Charles. Among the others were the Heythrop, Cumberland Farmers, Cheshire, Bicester with Whaddon, Chase, Isle of Wight, Essex, West Norfolk, and Puckeridge and Thirsk. The organisation claimed that its evidence included photographs of the dens.

The claims come in the wake of *The Independent's* revelation yesterday that the prestigious Sissington Hunt in North Yorkshire is under investigation by the RSPCA. Inspectors and police found a pair of cubs trapped in a cage on land owned by the hunt.

After yesterday's disclosure, the Master of the Foxhounds, the sport's governing body, announced that it was launching its own inquiry into the claims.

Animal activists say the dens undermine the argument of blood-sport supporters that hunting is essentially a form of pest control.

Fields Sports campaigners are said to be deeply embarrassed about the Sissington Hunt revelations, which are the result of an investigation by the League Against Cruel Sports. If animal cruelty charges are brought, it could lead to a maximum penalty of six months' jail or a £5,000 fine.

The British Field Sports Society claimed that what ap-

BY KIM SENGUPTA

peared to have been found at Sissington was "very much a legacy of the past".

There were further claims yesterday that some hunts created artificial earths to ensure that there were foxes for slaughter.

Clifford Pellow, a kennelman and huntsman for 28 years, said the practice was a fairly commonplace. "Artificial earths ensure foxes are attracted to the area and provide foxes for poor scent days," he said.

"Some hunts then take a further step. The kennelmen work through the night to block up all badger setts and earths – it's called 'earth-stopping'. This means the foxes cannot get away, and ensures a good day's hunting."

Mr Pellow claimed that in one incident a fox caught in a trap was kept in a shed for two days and then tipped out on the day of the hunt. "Despite all this, the fox actually got away. The theory of pest control is a joke. Hunting people have hundreds of excuses but really no justification for what they do."

Peter Hepworth, a Yorkshire farmer, said he knew of a hunt which had around 16 artificial earths. "It may well be shocking but it is not particularly surprising to country people. Having the artificial earths ensures the hunters do not have what they consider to be a wasted day. It is particularly important if the hunt has an important guest; it makes sure there is a fox to hunt and there is no embarrassment on the big day."

Special squad aims to stop illegal Viagra

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

A HIT SQUAD has been set up by the Government to investigate private clinics which are selling the impotence drug, Viagra, illegally.

The Medicines Control Agency has established a Special Enquiry Unit within its enforcement division to target the illegal sales because of concern about the high level of public interest in the drug.

Viagra is not yet licensed in the UK, and MCA agents will have the power to seize illegally imported supplies and have offenders prosecuted.

In a strongly worded warning, the MCA said yesterday: "Viagra is a powerful medicinal product and should only be used in accordance with the directions of a doctor. People run very real risks with their health if they obtain it from other sources, such as mail order or the Internet, and take it without the direction of a doctor. We strongly advise against buying Viagra this way."

The unit was set up to crack down on the black market in Viagra before it grows too big – there have already been more than a dozen reports of illegal attempts to sell Viagra in Britain.

Tories scent blood over Robinson

THE TREASURY minister Geoffrey Robinson was yesterday defended by Peter Snape, the Labour MP as a "sitting target" who was being accused by Tory MPs of impropriety because he was rich and a Labour minister.

Tory MPs were in full cry in their pursuit of Mr Robinson, the Paymaster General, for allegedly failing to declare £150,000 paid as a director of a company run by Robert Maxwell. Mr Snape, a friend of Mr Robinson, said: "It's not a new allegation. It's been made previously and denied previously."

As the row rumbled on yesterday it emerged that divisions had appeared in the pro-hunting Countryside Alliance, over the sacking of one of its most high-profile campaigners.

Janet George fronted the public relations campaign for the Countryside March to London earlier this year but was sacked by the alliance's new chief executive.

Far left, igloo of sticks, known as a stockpile, taken in Heythrop Hunt country. Left, brick structure taken at Long Marston, Hertfordshire.

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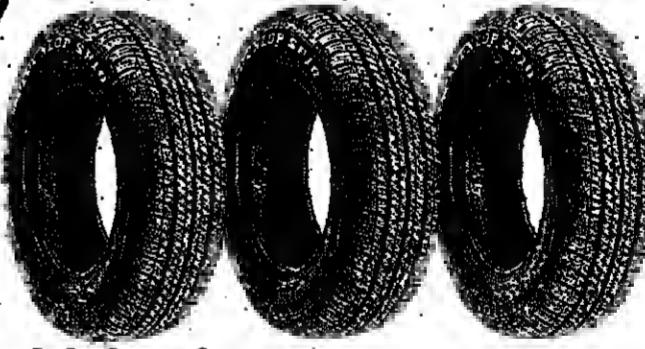
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MPs wait in wings to succeed Madam Speaker

BY COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

THE LIMBERING up has already started for a candidate to replace Betty Boothroyd, as Speaker of the House of Commons, although her last uncertain call is likely to be some ears away.

Whoever emerges will be hard-pressed to match the star qualities of the former dancer who became the first woman speaker in history with the words: "Call me Madam!"

Mrs Boothroyd, 68, has signalled that she will be standing down from her West Bromwich East constituency at the next general election, sparking speculation at Westminster about her successor.

There is no shortage of candidates to take on the chair, the wig, the black tights and the buckled shoes to call "Order, Order" in the House. Traditionally, there is a "Buggins' turn" with the Tories alternating with Labour for the chair.

As a result, MPs are already drawing up lists of senior Tories who might fit the bill, such as Sir Brian Mawhinney, the former party chairman, and Sir Norman Fowler, the party's "come-back kid", who was appointed by William Hague as home affairs spokesman in this month's

reshuffle. Tom King, a former defence secretary, and John MacGregor, former Leader of the Commons and a member of the Neill committee on public standards, could be "establishment" Tory candidates.

Labour MPs yesterday said neither Sir Brian nor Sir Norman would be acceptable to the majority of Labour backbenchers. Sir Alan Haselhurst,

the deputy Speaker, a pro-European Tory moderate, may be a better bet, but he is regarded as lacking the star qualities now seen as part of the job for controlling the House in the television era. Another prime candidate is Patrick Cormack, a senior backbencher Tory who was overlooked for preferment by John Major.

Labour MPs would relish

the prospect of seeing the former chancellor, Ken Clarke in the Speaker's wig. "Ken Clarke would be brilliant, but whether he would want to do it another matter," said a ministerial aide.

"You need someone with a hit of wit, and a hit of charm," said a Tory MP. "Fowler would be all right, I suppose that must be why he's hanging around so long."

There is also the intriguing prospect of it switching for the first time to the Liberal Democrats and Alan Beith, who lost the leadership race to Paddy Ashdown after David Steel retired, is regarded as having the right qualities.

By the time Ms Boothroyd steps down, there could be unexpected Labour candidates from the Cabinet, such as Ann Taylor the Leader of the House, Michael Martin who is on the Speaker's panel of chairmen, is another popular Labour contender.

Mrs Boothroyd, a former Labour right-winger shows no signs of being in a rush to leave, despite the arduous hours, and the exhausting tours abroad when MPs are on their recess.

She has confided to friends that when she gets a break, she likes nothing more than to go parascending from the back of a motor boat in the Mediterranean.

Letting the wind blow through her hair dangling from a parachute, the Speaker can forget all about points of order.

Leading article Review, page 3

The Speaker, Betty Boothroyd, is still in office, but already possible successors, such as Sir Norman Fowler (top left) and Kenneth Clarke, are being mooted. Brian Harris

IRA 'to reveal twelve secret graves'

Y ALAN MURDOCH
Dublin

THE IRA is preparing to reveal the locations of bodies of a dozen of its victims who are buried in secret graves in the Irish Republic, former tsb Prime Minister, Albert Reynolds, signalled last night. The dead were civilians abducted and killed between 1972 and 1980 and have been the subject of a campaign by families of the Disappeared, a pressure group for bereaved relatives. This has pressed both Sinn Fein and the IRA to turn the bodies or reveal their burial places.

Mr Reynolds told *The Independent* his contacts indicated that an announcement could come before the autumn. He said: "I would be hopeful that in the very near future there will be a move towards identification of where bodies have been buried.

"I think it is part of a healing process that is absolutely necessary to close a dark chapter that has been there for too long," he said.

"This should be part of the confidence-building measures that are necessary to make the Northern Ireland Assembly work, and to make the relationship with Unionism and nationalism and republicanism easier to put together in the Assembly.

The former Taoiseach, who played a key role in drawing the Provisional IRA into the peace process between 1992



The former Irish Prime Minister, Albert Reynolds, expecting an announcement before the autumn

and 1994, said a move on the graves issue would be "a clear recognition of the necessity for reconciliation, and that the republican movement will play their part". He believes an IRA gesture towards the relatives would reaffirm republicans' acceptance of purely democratic methods and reaffirm finally that the conflict is over.

Irish Government sources said it was an issue Dublin had taken up repeatedly, but were not yet aware of any specific agreement. The expected formula would entail Garda authorities in the Irish Republic being informed of the graves' locations, and Duhlin's State Pathologist's Office assisting in identifying bodies.

A Dublin Government spokesman said: "We would hope there is a move of this kind about to locate missing persons. It is something that would be very welcome and would be fully encouraged."

Publicly, Sinn Fein sources were cautious, stressing many IRA members with information had themselves died in

the conflict and hoped relatives' expectations would not be raised without good reason. But a senior source said they "would very much hope that it is possible, and we hope it will happen".

Families of the Disappeared spokesman Seamus McEneaney, son-in-law of Jean McCourt, a mother of 10

abducted from her home in Belfast last year wouldn't identify which of the disappeared they were involved in. So I find it incredible that they have located the burial ground of 12 of them," he said.

"Very senior members of Sinn Fein last year wouldn't identify which of the disappeared they were involved in. So I find it incredible that they have located the burial ground of 12 of them," he said.

Mr McEneaney said if Sinn Fein wanted to enter a democratic process, the issue of missing bodies would need to be resolved.

"We know for a fact some of the disappeared bodies are buried under housing estates in west Belfast. So how come all of a sudden they have turned up in Donegal or Louth or wherever?" he said.

In February, the Irish Prime Minister, Bertie Ahern, told the Dail he had again requested republicans to renew their contacts in an effort to end the families' ordeal. He told Sinn Fein leaders it would be a helpful confidence-building measure, and reminded them that in other international conflicts, information on disappeared people had been part of a peace.

As votes were counted in the Northern Ireland Assembly elections, Families for the Disappeared yesterday sought signatures outside Belfast City Hall for a petition seeking information on the missing, to be handed in to Sinn Fein.

A YACHT at the centre of an identity-swap murder trial is to be inspected by the jury, it was decided yesterday.

The eight women and four men trying Albert Walker, a 52-year-old Canadian businessman, at Exeter Crown Court will view his 24ft cruiser *Lady Jane* one morning next week.

Charles Barton QC, for the prosecution, and Richard Ferguson QC, for the defence, both said they wanted the jury to see the craft, which is out of the water at an undisclosed location.

The Crown alleged during the first week of the trial that Mr Walker, who fled to Britain to escape marital and financial problems in Canada, murdered Ronald Platt - whose identity he had assumed.

Mr Barton has alleged that Mr Walker, who kept the *Lady Jane* on a mooring on the river Dart in south Devon, took Mr Platt out sailing on 20 July 1996, and put him "over the side" of the vessel, weighing him down with a 10lb anchor.

Mr Platt's body was hauled up off Teignmouth, south Devon, in the nets of the Brixham fishing vessel *Makerry* on 28 July 1996, and was identified via his Rolex watch.

Mr Walker, from Woodham Walter in Essex, denies murder. The trial was adjourned until Monday.

Identity-swap murder jury to view yacht

BY CATHARINE COURT

During Mr Platt between 18 and 22 July 1996.

Dr Bob Allen, a lecturer and specialist in river and ocean hydraulics from University College, Swansea, said the body would have sunk to the seabed in about 30 seconds if the anchor had been attached to it.

The body would have not moved at all in the tides and currents if it had been weighed down with the anchor, he told the jury.

Barry Hall, manager of the Sport Nautique chandler in Dartmouth, south Devon, said that on 8 July 1996, a customer using the name Platt bought seven items by credit card, including a 10lb plough anchor.

Patrick Gill, who served the customer, said the man had a Canadian accident.

Mr Gill said he recommended a heavier anchor to the customer, who told him he had a motor cruiser. But the customer, he said, decided the 10lb anchor "would be adequate."

The prosecution has alleged that Mr Walker assumed Mr Platt's identity after paying him to start a new life in Canada, but then murdered him when he returned to Britain.

The trial was adjourned until Monday.

Tory leader has sinus operation

BY COLIN BROWN

sinus blocked, and had the operation under general anaesthetic.

A Tory party spokesman said Mr Hague would be speaking with his doctor over the weekend and deciding when to return to active duty.

Joseph Carlin, the ear, nose and throat consultant who saw the Tory leader, said: "Mr Hague's general good health should assist with a speedy recovery. He was very sensible to follow doctors' advice throughout this week. By putting his health first, he will make a full recovery much more quickly."

CAMPAIGNERS FEAR plans to pedestrianise the heart London could be under threat.

It follows reports that proposals to reduce traffic in Trafalgar Square and Parliament Square - due to be voted on by Westminster City councillors next Tuesday - have been rejected by Government focus groups.

The plans were to close some of the roads alongside the squares to enable visitors to stroll more freely outside Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament, and in front of the National Gallery. Similar schemes operate in

Leicester Square, Covent Garden and in front of Buckingham Palace.

A ministerial meeting chaired by John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, was held in March to decide how the Whitehall project should be taken forward.

Now the masterplan will be discussed by Westminster council's planning committee.

Mr Prescott has given the proposal his blessing. He said: "I am delighted that we have a masterplan that shows how the historic heart of London can be returned to the people."

"I am looking forward with

Focus group threat to city pedestrian plan

great interest to taking delivery of the final proposals."

But Paul DeZyra of Friends of the Earth fears focus groups have rejected banning cars because it would be unpopular with the middle classes.

He said: "Pedestrianisation is an important feature for central London and we would be supportive, although it is not a total solution. It sounds as though Tony Blair is keen to bend over backwards to appease polluting motorists."

"If we cannot get pedestrianisation in central London, then we don't stand any chance of pedestrianisation elsewhere."

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NHS goes abroad to buy cheap drugs



Denise Parkinson, a multiple sclerosis sufferer, who has paid £10,000 a year for drugs doctors refused to prescribe

BY PAUL LASHMAR

THE National Health Service has started buying drugs from abroad, saving up to 40 per cent on the same drugs supplied by the same drug companies in Britain.

Plans to make substantial savings were outlined in documents presented to a meeting of senior health executives this week, which would help cut the NHS's £5bn annual drugs bill.

The NHS purchasing arm admitted yesterday that it had been buying drugs on the "parallel import" market. Some NHS Trusts, including those covering hospitals in Southampton and West Midlands, have been buying on this grey market for some time.

These moves will embarrass the Government, which has pricing agreements with the drug companies that maintain prices at levels higher than for the same drugs in other European countries.

The new deals are possible because of the growth of parallel import companies which take advantage of lower prices in France, Spain and Italy to export to other countries including Britain. The strong pound has made the drugs even cheaper and the trade is booming. The parallel import market into Britain is already estimated to be worth £300m a year.

The NHS Supplies Trust, which buys drugs for many of the country's hospitals, said yesterday it had bought drugs on the parallel import market,

COMPARISON OF COSTS OF SELECTED DRUGS					
Drug	Treatment	Manufacturer	NHS price	Parallel import quote	June 98
Neurotin 100x100mg	Anti convulsant	Parke-Davis	£22.86	£13.60	
Esmolol 25x10mg	Hypertension	Merck	£18.50	£15.10	
Celoxine 100x1mg	Parkinson's disease	Lilly	£219.62	£88.20	
Tarivid 100x200mg	Infections	Hoechst	£102.51	£67.50	
Rihuzole 40x250mg	HIV	Glaxo	£124.95	£93.40	

but that accounted for "a small percentage of our business". A spokesman added: "I would like to emphasise that all our parallel imports contracts are squeaky clean in terms of EU procedure."

On Tuesday the NHS committee that advises on national drug purchase policy, the National Pharmaceutical Supplies Group, met to examine proposals to buy a wide range of drugs on the parallel import market.

According to confidential documents obtained by tomorrow night's *Money Programme* on BBC2, the NHS could achieve substantial savings.

Some of the drugs listed, including those used for the treatment of schizophrenia and motor neurone disease, are costly and are rationed by NHS Trusts, some of which admitted that they could treat more patients if the drugs were cheaper.

The NHS documents show that the drug Rihuzole which is

used in the treatment of motor neurone disease, at present has a British list price of £266, compared with the Spanish wholesale price of £214. A parallel importer can offer the drug at £243.24.

While purchases by Trusts have been piecemeal so far, if the NHS as a whole began to import drugs, the Government-drug companies agreement would disintegrate.

Glaxo Wellcome said parallel imports were already costing the company "tens of millions a year". Although the company's pre-tax profits last year were £2.6 billion, Glaxo said that "had we not had this parallel trade situation, we clearly would have had more resources available to research new medicines."

"We've certainly had less money coming into us than if we did not have this iniquitous trade that is of no benefit to patients, no benefit to the Government and no benefit to ourselves."

NHS won't pay for too costly treatment

IT STARTED with the pins and needles in her legs, as Denise Parkinson walked across the college campus.

Then she began to suffer from loss of balance, vertigo, deteriorating eyesight and severe bouts of sickness. She was forced to quit her job as a part-time sociology lecturer at University College, Worcester.

In 1992, almost two years after the first symptoms appeared, doctors confirmed she was suffering from Multiple Sclerosis.

At that time, the mother-of-two had ambitions to study for a PhD and become a full-time lecturer, but the crippling illness began totally to dominate her life.

"I just slowed down and it was quite dangerous for me to be at home alone because I would fall over," said Mrs Parkinson, aged 43, of Bredenbury, near Hereford.

"One of the most frightening things is that you choke quite a lot. I also had total body cramp - it was so painful, the doctor gave me morphine."

Doctors gave Mrs Parkinson

BY RICHARD SMITH

steroids to relieve the symptoms, but refused to prescribe the more effective, but more costly, beta-interferon treatment.

So 13 months ago, Mrs Parkinson and her husband, David, who owns an electrical transformer company, decided they would pay the £10,000-a-year cost of the drug Avonex.

She is one of more than 70 MS sufferers being treated at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, in Birmingham, but the local NHS trust can afford to prescribe the drug for only 44 patients.

The trust could save more than £70,000 if it accepted "parallel imports" of Avonex from Italy, allowing them to offer the drug to more patients. It is thought that Mrs Parkinson is now near the top of the waiting list.

The couple have no savings and they have had to shave plans to move from their two-bedroom detached bungalow into a larger house. The drug is brought to their home by courier van once a week and

Mr Parkinson administers it by injecting his wife in the thigh.

One month after Mrs Parkinson began taking the drug, she began to feel better and she has experienced fewer severe attacks. She has now started studying for her PhD in English.

"For the first time there is hope and I don't feel MS is the dominating force in my life," Mrs Parkinson said.

"I have more energy. The drug is not a cure but it's keeping the disease at bay and giving me hope, which is very important."

"It's changed my life. I feel happier and more at ease with myself. I still have some of the disability, but I couldn't possibly have done the PhD without the drug."

"I feel annoyed that the majority of people don't have access to the drug and that it's rationed because of cost. It is the duty of central Government to pay for this drug to be more widely available. They have a duty to provide it for MS sufferers, but at present it's like a lottery," she said.

'Easy access' to Billie-Jo's back garden

BY PAUL EDWARDS

IT WOULD be easy to gain access to the rear of the family home where 13-year-old Billie-Jo Jenkins was found battered to death; a court was told yesterday.

Sian Jenkins, 40, denies murdering her foster daughter Billie-Jo, whose body was found on the patio at the back of their home in Hastings, East Sussex, in February last year.

The prosecution alleges that Mr Jenkins battered her as she painted the patio doors, and then took his daughters Lottie and Annie on a bogus trip to buy white spirit before returning to the house and "finding" the body.

Investigator Nicholas Hillman told the jury at Lewes Crown Court yesterday he and an assistant had examined the area at the rear of the house.

It would be easy to gain access to the back garden from next door and through wasteland at the back, he said.

Earlier Professor Michael Trimble, a professor of neurology, who has written a book about post-traumatic disorder, was asked about the effect of shock.

Mr Jenkins had been questioned when he was testifying about why he had not followed instructions from the ambulance

British eat most cheaply on Corfu

BRITISH holidaymakers pay least for taxis in Tenerife and the cheapest eating out is on Greek islands, according to a spending index of popular destinations.

The cost of many usual holiday items has dropped sharply recently thanks to the strength of the pound, said Thomas Cook, the compilers of the index.

Tenerife had the cheapest taxi, with a three-mile trip costing £2.98 compared with £1.35 for the same journey in Malta. Best value for eating out was the Greek island of Corfu where a three-course set meal cost only £8.70. Malta at £13.75 has the most expensive meals.

The survey found that Spain's Costa del Sol had the cheapest beer, at 65p a bottle, while Sorrento in Italy had the dearest, at £1.80 a bottle. A cup of coffee cost 45p in Turkey had the cheapest 24-exposure film (£2.05), while the dearest was in Malta (£8.60).

"Things have just got better and better for holidaymakers over the past three years since we started the index," said Andrew Windsor, Thomas Cook retail director.

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Welcome to Glastonbury, the biggest communal mudbath in the land

BY JOHN DAVISON

THE RAIN came down on another Glastonbury Festival opening yesterday, reviving memories of last year's mudbath and dampening some enthusiasm with the prospect of a repeat performance.

After a dull, drizzly start, black rainclouds finally engulfed the huge natural arena in mid-afternoon. More of the same, with attendant mud, lights and mayhem, is forecast.

For medical services, it means packing away the aloe vera lotion and rehydration kits and breaking out elasticated bandages to treat the twists and sprains of those who, perhaps a little the worse for wear, have fallen flat on some part of their anatomy. For the police, it has initially meant a relatively quiet time. "It's the quietest festival I can remember," a spokesman said. "So far."

Up the hill in the healing field, where alternative practitioners ply their trade, one early riser gave an indication that many of his year's festival goers have been concentrating their early efforts under cover. A sign outside the "first aid" tent announced: "Condoms for hire, small deposit required" - a humorous comment on the fact that they had run out of supplies.

"We give them away for free and we had hundreds, but they've all gone already," said Paul Diprose, who marshalls a group of National Health Service nurses in the field to complement Fluffy Welfare, Indian Head Massage and a Yin Yang marathon.

Mr Diprose also reported a steady stream of "fence-related injuries", referring to those who ame a cropper while scaling the 4 ft steel perimeter fence to void the £20 entrance fee.

But it was all proving too much for Shining Bear, who, as reclining on a sheepskin in his tent advertising "Didroo Healing". He was getting some rest in before appearing with Rolf Harris in part of last night's show, he said.



A brave early riser greeting the morning at 6am yesterday at Glastonbury as most of the festival goers huddle together for shelter in tent city

Tom Pilston

"The sound of the Didg" takes the thinking mind on a spiritual journey, allowing the natural healing process to take place," explained Bear, a huge well-built man with piercing blue eyes. "I've seen some incredible results, especially with emotional stress and trauma."

On the other side of the valley, at festival medical services, business was a bit more brisk.

Here the 100 or so conventional staff are co-ordinated by a doctor wearing a head-set and microphone, and people wear green bibs and baseball caps.

By yesterday afternoon, they had treated more than 700 of the 100,000 people estimated to be on site. The addition of another soul, in the shape of this year's first festival baby (there were three last year), was

averted by a quick referral of a mother in labour to hospital.

Otherwise, it was the usual range of sprains and burns from tent fires, treated in the 17-room medical centre. Psychiatric services reported a quiet time, perhaps because no one had had the chance to get seriously paranoid from the range of illegal substances available.

Police yesterday reported

the arrest of three people for possession of drugs and 21 for dealing. A new mobile analysis unit allows quick processing of cases and avoids having to give dealers bail, which would enable them to go back to work.

In the five weeks leading up to the Somerset festival, there were 250 arrests for drug-related offences by those suspected of stockpiling for the

event and more than £1m of drugs seized - mostly cannabis.

Certainly there was plenty of weed and goodwill in the air on Wednesday night, when the gathering crowd resembled a ragged medieval army on the eve of battle. Banners flew from Canada, Jamaica and South Africa, and combat gear was the

favoured sartorial statement. There was a heavy flag bias in

avour of Inglaterra, and last night the main performance by James was put back so football fans could watch the England match on a huge screen.

Weather and mishaps apart, the general aim was to have a good time. Richard, of Newcastle, did not even know which bands were playing. "I'm not really here for the music," he said. "I just come for the... thing."

The case continues on Monday.

Marine hit for falling asleep'

BY MIKE BROWNBILL

A ROYAL Marine told a court martial yesterday he was punched in the face by a sergeant for falling asleep during a training lecture.

Marine David Tait, alleged Sergeant David Foggin punched him through an open tent window after he was ordered to stand up during the lecture.

The soldier gave evidence in the trial of two Royal Marines non-commissioned officers accused of bullying recruits. A lieutenant is also accused of failing to report the matter.

The court heard how the alleged attack happened while Marine Tait was taking part in the tough 30-week Royal Marines commando training course. Marine Tait was one of 40 recruits on Exercise First Base at Woodbury Common, near the Marine's base in Lympstone, Devon, in 1996.

Marine Tait said: "I was instructed to stand up by Corporal Amphlett, who was giving the lecture, because I was falling asleep. I fell a strike to the right hand side of my face.

"I didn't turn around, but I heard Sergeant Foggin's voice instructing me to wake up. I didn't report it to anybody because I thought it was trivial."

The court has heard how other recruits were allegedly punched and kicked in a string of attacks by Sergeant Foggin and Corporal Amphlett.

The allegations were later brought to the attention of Lieutenant Michael Geldard but he failed to take action.

Sgt Foggin denies four charges of ill-treating recruits and four alternatives of battery. Corporal Amphlett denies one charge of ill-treating recruits and an alternative charge of battery, while Lieutenant Geldard denies one charge of conduct to the prejudice of good order or military discipline.

The case continues on Monday.

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Schools cut out genetically modified foods

BY CHARLES ARTHUR
Technology Editor

MORE THAN 1,300 schools in six council areas have taken genetically modified (GM) foods off their menus in the past few months. Two other councils, with hundreds of schools in their care, are expected to join them soon, as public debate about GM foods grows.

The move, which originated at Kent County Council, stems from the concerns of one of the biggest school meal caterers that food provided to schools should meet "the highest standards of safety".

It has imposed the anti-GM recipe on all the 1,308 schools it caters for in Kent, Sandwell Borough Council, Essex, and Durham county councils, and Lewisham borough in London.

Devon and Oxfordshire are also considering similar moves, which would exclude any food labelled as containing genetically altered components from school lunches.

Eventually, that could mean taking some standard fare, such as bread and biscuits off lunch menus, as they use soya grown in the United States which is mixed with genetically modified strains.

But the decision was described as "unnecessary" by a spokesman for Monsanto, the biotechnology company which makes the most widely used GM component, soya beans which are resistant to the company's herbicide Roundup.

"No novel food like this can go on for sale until it has been approved by seven government committees, four different departments and been approved by ministers from 15 countries," the spokesman said.

"We are confident that it is safe to eat." Monsanto now intends to try to persuade Chartwell, the catering company which supplies the schools, to change its policy.

The news comes amid intensifying debate over GM foods and crops. Earlier this month the Prince of Wales spoke out against the technology. Recent polls have also shown that opposition among the public to genetically engineered foods has grown in the past 18 months: 58 per cent opposed it in a recent MORI poll, while only 22 per cent supported it.

However, Chartwell said yesterday that it is very difficult to ensure that no GM component enters food.

"The problem is to identify GM products, because there's no legal requirement to label products that have been made from genetically modified material," said a spokeswoman.

"Our policy is that we would not knowingly use GM food."

The councils hope that they will be able to use their combined weight to pressure the Government to label foods containing modified components.

Oxford City Council has written to the Government asking ministers to ensure that GM crops are segregated from standard ones.

The principal difficulty is with foods made with soya or its extracts.

In the US this year, farmers have more than doubled their plantings of genetically modified soya and maize.

Soya from the Monsanto company, genetically engineered to be resistant to the company's Roundup herbicide, now makes up 30 per cent of plantings — up from a couple of per cent in 1996, when the crop was first marketed.

Soya and soya oils are now used in about 40 per cent of standard foodstuffs such as biscuits, bread and cakes.

However, American soya growers do not separate the modified versions from the natural strains, meaning that most of the supply from the US, the world's largest soya grower, is intermixed.

Government proposals to label foods as "potentially containing" genetically modified components have received a mixed response.

John Voss

Gavin Moore, Labour chair of education in the London borough of Lewisham, said:

Delegates at the Council of Local Education Authorities annual conference in Buxton, Derbyshire, also gave only cautious support to Education Action Zones.

The teenager's teeth were so badly eaten away that his fillings were protruding, it was claimed.

Dentists blamed his condition on the high levels of acid in alcopops, alcoholic fruit drinks, combined with the fact that he was prone to vomiting.

The boy said he went out most nights and drank beer and "several bottles of alcoholic lemonade drink". He also admitted he was often sick because of the amount he drank.

This would have damaged his teeth further since vomiting brings up acid from the stomach.

Dr Elizabeth O'Sullivan and Professor Martin Curzon, from the Leeds Dental Institute, describe the case in the British Dental Journal.

Although tooth erosion caused by alcopops and vomiting had not been reported before, they believed it could be a "significant problem" in parts of the population.

Dr O'Sullivan, a senior registrar in paediatric dentistry, said: "Alcopops are very popular — over £265m worth were sold in 1996. People need to be alerted to the substantial damage that these acidic drinks can do to teeth."

"Anyone who drinks alcopops regularly should consider reducing the amounts they drink and the frequency with which they drink them. They should also see a dentist regularly."

The teenager's teeth were treated with veneers — thin layers of acrylic or porcelain material — and white fillings, and given advice. After six months the erosion had stopped.

Dental erosion is also caused by excessive consumption of citrus fruits, fruit juices and fizzy soft drinks.

Liz Pascoe in the kitchens at St Paul's Infant School, Maidstone, in Kent, where genetically modified foods are off the menu

John Voss

New spending fails to save 2,000 teaching jobs

BY JUDITH JUDGE
Education Editor

TWO THOUSAND teaching jobs have been lost this summer and more are threatened, despite the deepening teacher recruitment crisis, according to a survey published today.

An extra £1bn for local authority spending on schools has failed to remedy years of cuts in which budgets have been pared to the bone and class sizes have risen.

The survey, by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, has been published as education ministers are bidding for more money in the comprehensive spending review.

It covers 9,500 primary and secondary schools, more than one-third of the total. The survey found that 752 teaching jobs had been lost and another

schools taking the opportunity to make older, more expensive staff redundant to make way for cheaper, younger ones.

In some places, teachers have been made redundant because the number of pupils is declining, but in most the union blames cost-cutting.

A spokesman said: "A year ago we were dealing with a three-headed education system. Even if new resources are beginning to arrive in schools, it is not yet enough. I am sure the Government knows this."

Ministers have begun a multi-million-pound advertising recruitment campaign because of an alarming drop in people applying to teacher training courses. Figures released last month showed that

the total number of teachers has begun to decline, though only by around 3,000.

Peter Smith, the union's general secretary, said: "This is gloomy news for a government which puts such emphasis on education. At the very moment when we need to be recruiting teachers, there is worrying evidence that serving teachers are either jumping ship or being made to walk the plank."

However, the loss of teaching jobs appears to be slowing. A similar survey carried out two years ago found that 4,000 teachers were losing their jobs. A Department for Education spokesman said an extra 1,500 teachers were being employed in the Government's initiative to reduce class sizes.

■ The Government's pledge on class sizes cannot be delivered without tough limits on parental choice, Labour councillors warned yesterday.

Ministers were trying to achieve the impossible, they said, in promising parents smaller infant classes, as well as the right to choose a school.

"You shouldn't make pledges if you aren't in a position to carry them out. The Government has made two pledges on class sizes and parental choice. It is in danger of failing to deliver on either," Gavin Moore, Labour chair of education in the London borough of Lewisham, said.

Delegates at the Council of Local Education Authorities annual conference in Buxton, Derbyshire, also gave only cautious support to Education Action Zones.

The teenager's teeth were treated with veneers — thin layers of acrylic or porcelain material — and white fillings, and given advice. After six months the erosion had stopped.

Dental erosion is also caused by excessive consumption of citrus fruits, fruit juices and fizzy soft drinks.

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Little Egret nests in Britain for first time

SOME OF Europe's most graceful waterbirds, once rare visitors to Britain and Ireland, are now set to become a regular feature of the countryside, according to leading ornithologists.

Little Egrets, long-necked snowy-white members of the heron family, have established successful nesting colonies in Dorset and Ireland and a new report says climate warming could encourage the population to spread.

Forty years ago, only 23 of the marshland birds with wispy head plumes had ever been recorded here, and keen birdwatchers had to go to Mediterranean holidays for a glimpse.

The report by Leigh Lock, South West England Conservation Officer for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and Kevin Cook, warden of the Dorset Wildlife Trust's Brownsea Island reserve, points out that this is even better productivity than in the egret's heartland in the South of France.

This led to over 1,000 migrant egrets coming to English and Irish

BY BRIAN UNWIN

shores in some years - the world's most northerly gatherings - and a report in the new edition of the monthly journal *British Birds*

announces the details of what has been proposed, mild winters would be likely to encourage further overwintering, and increasingly warm sunniness would be suitable for breeding.

"While the precise effects of climate change are difficult to predict and a number of scenarios have been proposed, mild winters would be likely to encourage further overwintering, and increasingly warm sunniness would be suitable for breeding."

"If these occur, there may be even greater range expansion, and the Little Egret may become a familiar breeding species along the South Coast, possibly being joined by other southern European species, such as the Black-winged Stilt, before too long."

They point out that, on the Continent, Little Egrets often nest in the same groups of trees as Grey Herons.

This is the case with the Dorset and Ireland birds - and the report reckons that there is plenty of scope for them to nest in other places as well.

The report by Leigh Lock, South West England Conservation Officer for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and Kevin Cook, warden of the Dorset Wildlife Trust's Brownsea Island reserve, points out that this is even better productivity than in the egret's heartland in the South of France.

This led to over 1,000 migrant egrets coming to English and Irish



The Little Egret is beginning to breed in southern England and in Ireland

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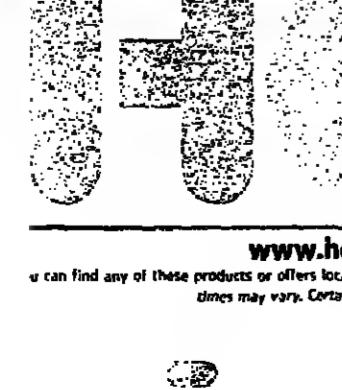
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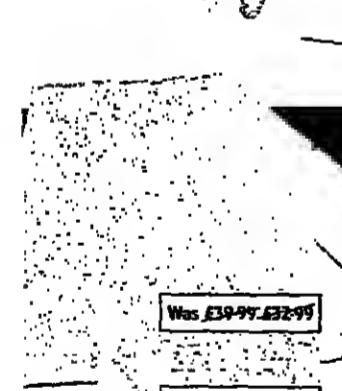
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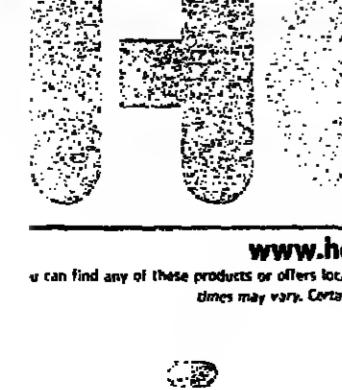
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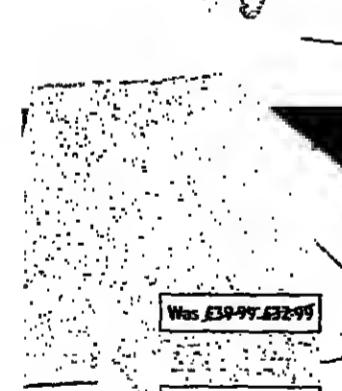
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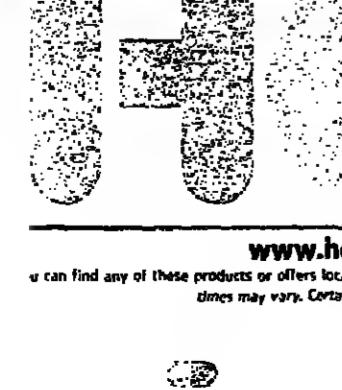
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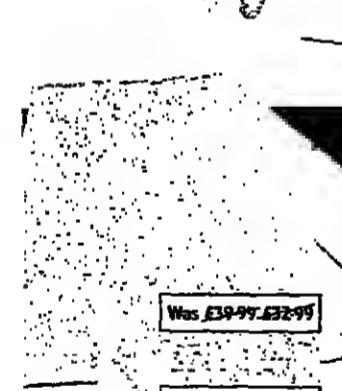
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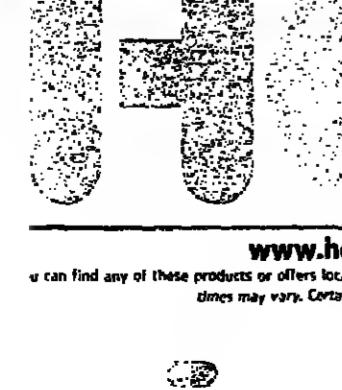
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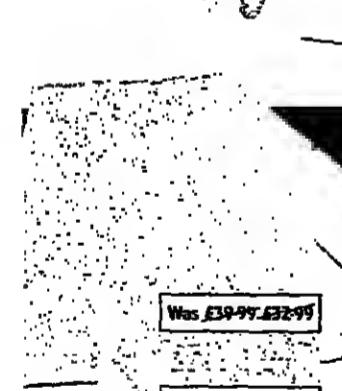
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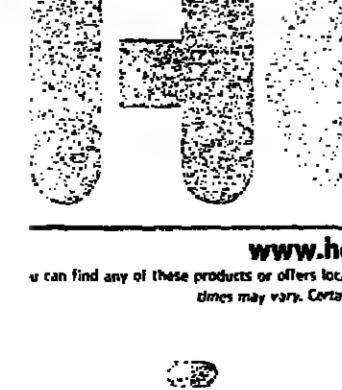
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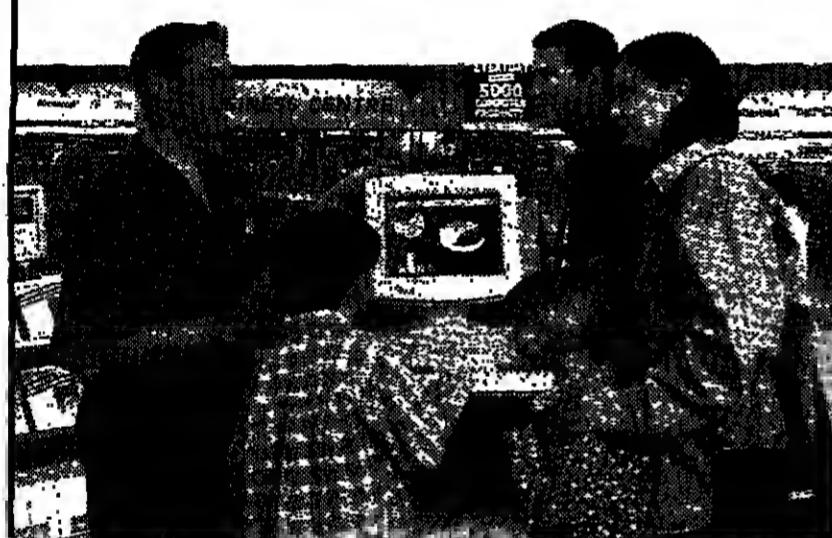
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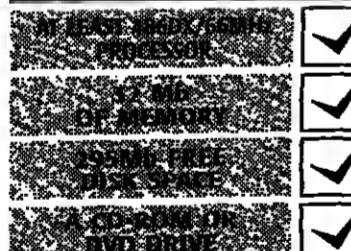
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Dissident arrests mar Clinton visit

PRESIDENT CLINTON flew to Peking last night, shifting from the picturescard start to his state visit today's controversial formal welcome in Tiananmen Square, scene of the June 1989 killings of pro-democracy activists.

But for ordinary Pekingers, US President's arrival was something to be cheered. As his 30-car convoy through the capital city in late evening, crowds of users-by erupted into spontaneous applause and people waved from halted buses. Today's summit with President Jiang Zemin represents business stop of the US president's nine-day "long march" through the mainland to Hong Kong. No-one expects any diplomatic breakthroughs, but the symbolic meeting will set a tone for the

rest of Mr Clinton's visit, including how the two sides deal with differences over human rights.

Yesterday, amid photo opportunities presidential visits to a Chinese village and the 2,000-year old terracotta warriors, neither side was pulling its punches over the question of why a number of Chinese dissidents had been rounded up by police before Mr Clinton's arrival in the city of Xian on Thursday evening.

The US National Security Advisor Sandy Berger said: "It's the China security apparatus doing what comes naturally. People are not debris to be swept up, for a visitor." He said China's response to US concerns had been "disappointing", and that Mr Clinton

would raise the matter today with Mr Jiang.

Mr Clinton, pressed by US reporters, said he found the reports disturbing. "If true they represent not China at its best, not China looking forwards but looking backwards. One of the reasons that I came here was to discuss both privately and publicly issues of personal freedom," he said.

China's own public statements yesterday appeared designed to confirm the West's worst perceptions. A foreign ministry spokesman declared:

"So-called arrests of dissidents by the Chinese side are rumours spread by people with an axe to grind." Technically, the Xian dissidents who were taken into custody by police were "detained", not "arrested".

For anyone who wanted an introduction to "old China"

yesterday, there could be no better demonstration than the state media's treatment of Mr Clinton's arrival in China, a visit long yearned for by the leadership in Peking. The main Chinese language newspapers yesterday morning printed not one single photograph of the US president's arrival, and omitted all his comments on the benefits of "individual thoughts, beliefs and creativity".

The biggest headline in yesterday's *People's Daily* read: "Conscientiously study and understand the spirit of comrade Jiang Zemin's speech and steadily walk in the front ranks of constructing reform and opening and modernisation."

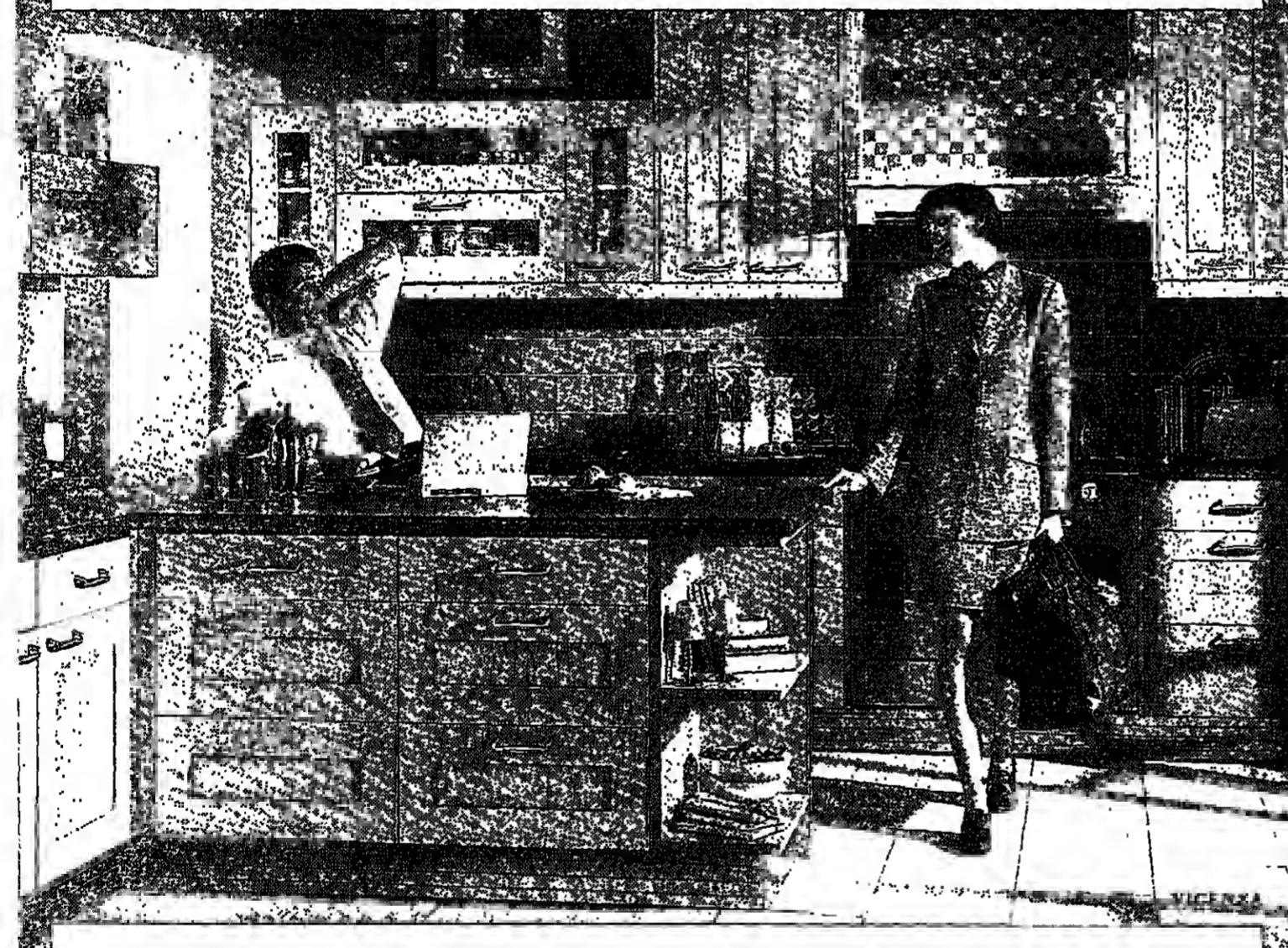
None of this has much relevance to the way most ordinary Chinese people now try to lead their lives.



President Clinton tours the terracotta warriors with his wife Hillary and daughter Chelsea Gary Hershorn

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Texas braces for Klan invasion

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Jasper

THE SMALL Texas town of Jasper has already been through a desperately painful month. When it wakes today the pain will still be there; and so will the Ku Klux Klan, the New Black Panthers and half the world's media.

It is the grisly death of a black man in a racially-inspired killing that has brought Jasper such pain. The murder hurt a small community that had never thought of itself as the spawning ground for such evil. But then the Klan decided to show its face to disavow the killing and make its mark on a place that had little time for it. It planned a march for today.

The Panthers, who have little to do with the original black power group, decided they would respond in kind and have threatened to come armed. Shops closed early last night as local officials prepared for a day that risks spilling over into something desperately ugly.

This dreadful pageant began when the dismembered body of James Byrd was found on 7 June, scattered along a mile of country road. He had hitched a ride from three white men but picked the wrong people. They beat him up, tied him with a chain to their pick-up truck and dragged him along until he was dead. Shawn Berry, one of those arrested, told police that Lawrence Brewer and John King had been drunk and had gone berserk.

Jasper is far from the big cities of Texas in the easternmost part of the state. It lies in an area of woods and lakes that has little to do with the sprawling cattle and oil regions to the west. Eastern Texas was a slave-holding area before the Civil War and has more than its fair share of racist groups and dark secrets today.



Klan victim James Byrd

stay away from the rally, and the square in front of the pretty courthouse is roped off, to keep the media away.

Jasper feels that it has been made the scapegoat for much wider problems that are not its own, and it is afraid.

For the Klan, this is a great opportunity. Members of up to seven different organisations will assemble in town today, including the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and the White Camellia, an Eastern Texas group. They argue that they had nothing to do with the murder and that it serves them little good.

Mark Potok, of the Southern Poverty Law Center, is not however well disposed towards the Klan, but he agrees.

Mugabe firm over white land seizure

ZIMBABWE'S PRESIDENT Robert Mugabe vowed yesterday that he would implement his controversial plans to seize mostly white-owned commercial farms for black peasants, even if donors withdrew vital support.

Mugabe said land redistribution had become an urgent issue in the wake of illegal occupation of some commercial farms by villagers.

He said any more delays would spark anarchy from peasants, who say Mugabe has failed to deliver on a key promise he made during Zimbabwe's independence war in the 1970s, in a struggle many say was fundamentally over land.

Officials deny that the government may have prompted villagers to occupy half a dozen farms in the past week in order to give impetus to Mugabe's land seizure plans.

Mugabe, 74, says blacks have a greater right to the land than white settlers he charges "stole" it.

Riots over killing of Algerian singer

HUNDREDS OF Berber youths smashed windows and damaged cars in angry protests yesterday after the murder of a popular Algerian singer, Lounes Matoub.

Matoub, 42, was killed yesterday near his Berber hometown. He was an outspoken critic of Algeria's violent stay-in-place conflict, attacking both the government and its fundamentalist Muslim opponents.

He had just returned from exile after surviving a kidnapping by Muslim militants.

Youths took to the streets of several towns in the region of Kabylie, eastern Algeria, and many clashed with police. No arrests were reported.

Thousands of people arrived in the Berber region-

"I don't think there is any evidence of the involvement of racist organisations [in the murder]," he said. But with Klan membership falling and more radical groups emerging, "the Klan has taken advantage of the situation."

The involvement of racist movements in the killing is the most controversial aspect of the case. Some argue that, brutal though the murder may have been, it was an isolated incident. "Don't go reading far more into this than these guys deserve," Time Magazine quoted a local attorney, Rife Kimler, as saying. "These are three guys who got mean, got drunk and saw an easy target."

But Time neglected to point out that Mr Kimler has acted as the lawyer for Charles Lee, the Grand Dragon of the White Camellia Knights.

What is not contested is that Brewer, King and Berry, had plenty of time to absorb the ideas and emotions of the white supremacist right.

All three had served time and it was in prison that they seem to have acquired links to right-wing groups. King is thought to have contacts with the Aryan Brotherhood, the largest white prison gang.

He had also adopted Odinism as his religion, a sect that worships Nordic gods and has a following among neo-Nazi skinheads.

If this killing, vile as it was, had just been an act of drunken savagery it was bad enough for Jasper. But it has brought the television cameras and the Klan and everybody else to a small place that is still grieving.

It is hard to feel that anything good can come from this, however hard and honestly the people of Jasper work to heal the wounds left by a murder.

MARIO VARGAS LLOSA

'The hooligan is no barbarian – he is an exquisite and terrible product of civilisation'

— THE WEEKEND REVIEW, PAGE 5

Releases bring hope to Nigeria

AFTER YEARS of corrupt and brutal rule, Nigeria has been offered another tantalising glimpse of hope with the release of a further 17 political prisoners by the country's new military ruler, General Abdulsalami Abubakar.

More than 40 prominent detainees have now been freed since General Abubakar was sworn in almost three weeks ago, a few hours after the death of the dictator General Sani Abacha, who, according to the regime, suffered a heart attack.

General Abubakar has also opened negotiations with banned pro-democracy groups and with Moshood Abiola, presumed winner of the annulled 1993 elections, who has spent the past four years in jail.

These developments raise doubts about initial forecasts that General Abubakar would simply be the reincarnation of his deposed predecessor.

Western diplomats are taking heart from the developments. The US, Britain and other European countries, which made a political, though

BY MARY BRAID

US assistant secretary of state for African affairs, said in Nigeria the stakes were "enormous". A democratic Nigeria she said was the key to a stable and prosperous West Africa and an invigorated continent. There are fears that Nigerian instability might lead to a return to conflict in Sierra Leone, where Nigerian troops ironically helped restore a democratically elected government.

But the US's desire to welcome back Nigeria into the international fold is driven by more concern about the region. A reformed Nigeria would end an embarrassment at home – though it has been scathing about Nigeria's human rights record. The US has continued to guzzle up its oil. Last year, the US doubled its oil purchases to \$6bn.

Little is known about General Abubakar, who is believed to be the military junta's compromise candidate. But US and European diplomats pin their hopes on a few established details which seem to set him apart from General Abacha. While General Abacha was the master of murky, military politics, the more low-key General Abubakar, 55, a Muslim from northern Nigeria, has risen through the ranks steadily avoiding politics and somehow sidestepping the endless coup plots, show trials and purges of the senior ranks.

After fighting in Nigeria's civil war in the late 1960s and serving as a UN peacekeeper in Lebanon in the 1980s he is one of only a few soldiers to have risen to the rank of general without holding government office. His associates insist he has never had political ambitions.

Observers hope he belongs to a faction of the armed forces now believed to regret the trashing of their reputation and integrity – to say nothing of the country's – by military rule. It is unclear just how numerous and influential they are.

But the armed forces, the largest in Africa, are split over the way ahead.

Some believe General Abubakar's hand is strengthened by his close association with former military leader Ibrahim Babangida, who recently emerged from a five-year silence as a born-again critic of military rule. There is speculation that Mr Babangida is planning a political comeback as a civilian or that the two men share the view that the military should get out of politics.

With General Abubakar's support, along with his true game plan, hard to gauge, it is wise to remember that compromise candidates elected by divided groups can find themselves in dangerously, even fatally, weak positions.

Abubakar: freed 40

not an economic pariah of oil-rich Nigeria, are now beginning to treat General Abubakar like an African Gorbachev.

Yesterday, the British foreign minister, Tony Lloyd, visited General Abubakar on behalf of the European Union, and Chief Emeka Anyaoku, secretary general of the Commonwealth, which suspended Nigeria after the execution of writer Ken Saro-Wiwa. The US is promising a high-level delegation as soon as Nigeria is ready to receive it.

Opposition figures warn that the West's enthusiasm is premature. Abubakar is promising a return to civilian rule, but so did a long line of military rulers before him. "So far so good," insisted US State Department spokesman James Rubin earlier this week. "There have been signals that ... General Abubakar wants to get the army away from its role as acting outside civilian rule of Nigeria."

On Thursday, Susan Rice,

IN BRIEF

Belarus leader unrepentant

DIPLOMATS FROM seven countries who left Belarus over a housing dispute will be allowed to return to Minsk "only with the permission of the Belarusian authorities", Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko said yesterday. Mr Lukashenko said he had offered to meet the ambassadors to discuss the dispute, but they refused, saying they needed to consult with their governments. "Let them consult, but they should know they can come back only with our permission," he said.

Indian shells kill villagers

SHells fired by Indian soldiers slammed into Pakistani villages along the disputed Kashmir border yesterday, killing five people, the state-run news agency reported. Police officials and witnesses said as many as 10 people have been killed by Indian gunfire in the last week.

Timorese denounce referendum

THOUSANDS of people in favour of continued Indonesian rule marched through the streets of East Timor's capital yesterday protesting at calls for a referendum on the future of the disputed territory, a news report said. The protest was held 24 hours before three ambassadors were scheduled to arrive in the East Timor capital Dili on an European Union fact-finding mission.

Ghost draws crowds

LARGE CROWDS, closely watched by security forces, have been gathering at a road junction in the Burmese capital after rumours that a ghost was terrorising a block of flats nearby. The intersection was the scene of brutal police action against pro-democracy marchers 10 years ago.



Two Albanians shake hands to clinch the sale of machine guns close to the border with Kosovo Arben Celi

Ashdown fears Kosovo catastrophe

By STEVE CRAWSHAW

THE LIBERAL Democrat leader, Paddy Ashdown, warned yesterday that the international community had a maximum of "six weeks to two months" to find a solution to the war in Kosovo, where clashes between Serbs and Albanians are worsening by the day.

Following a five-day trip to the region, Mr Ashdown argued that failure to act could lead to a disastrous explosion of violence, where "the potential ramifications are huge".

His fact-finding trip included conversations with leading politicians in Albania and Macedonia, both of which border Kosovo. Mr Ashdown said the large Albanian population in Macedonia, in particular, was "increasingly radicalised".

On the Albanian-Kosovo border, Mr Ashdown watched a Serb mortar unit and heavy machine guns attacking "one farmhouse after another". He said that he saw no returning fire.

He noted that the actions were in clear breach of commitments given to President Boris Yeltsin by President Slobodan Milosevic. The Kosovo Albanians are clearly out-gunned. But they have made enormous advances, despite the lack of

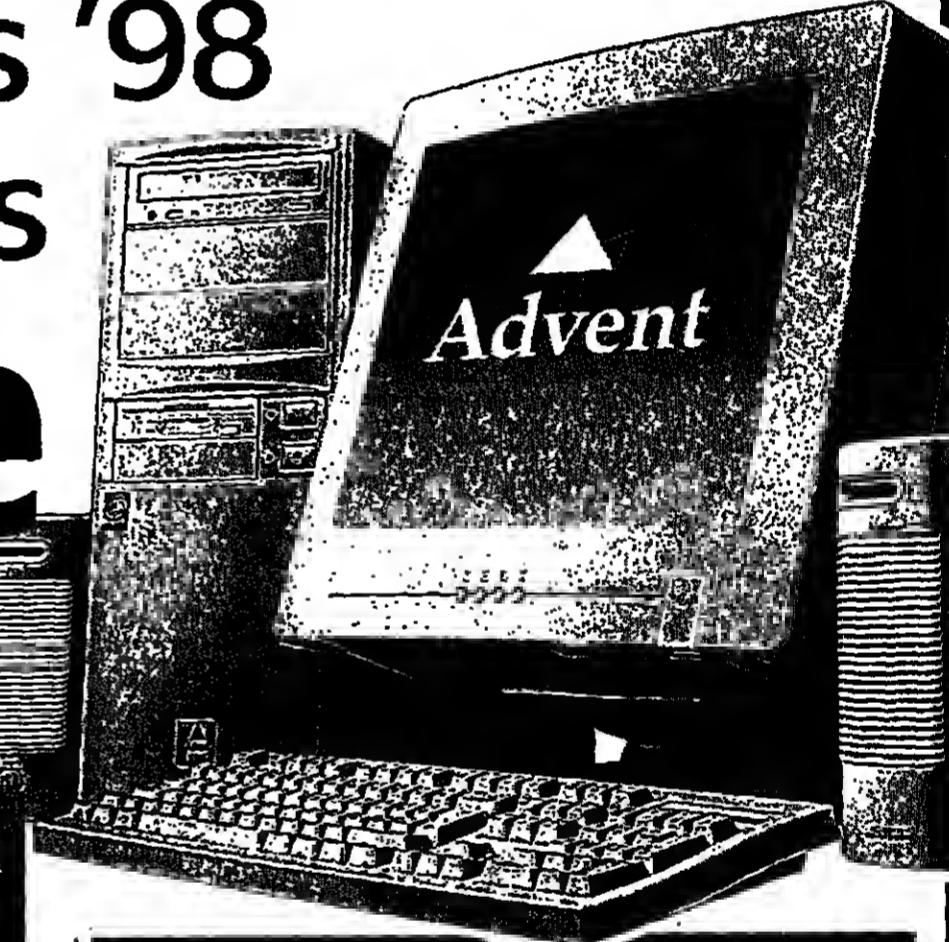
weapons, and small arms are in any case constantly smuggled in. Mr Ashdown described seeing one place that was "the Albanian equivalent of Sarajevo", with arms and ammunition, including weapons looted in last year's rioting freely on sale. The price-tag for a Kalashnikov was said to be \$10 (£6).

Mr Ashdown argued that was essential to "take steps to stop pan-Serb nationalism. Measures might include 'sanctions, if you wish'". But he made it clear that he believed the hanging threat of possible military action to be more effective.

He noted that Serb position shelling villages were "very open to air attack".

He argued, however, that the "danger of pan-Albanian nationalism" was also real. He said he opposed full independence – as opposed to enhanced autonomy – for Kosovo. "If independence happens, Macedonia blows up." And he suggested that the next strength of the guerrilla Kosovo Liberation Army, which now holds large swathes of territory in Kosovo, meant it would be difficult to dictate terms.

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Belgium opens old war wounds

BY KATHERINE BUTLER
in Brussels

MORE THAN 50 years after the Allied liberation of Belgium, the country's two linguistic communities, the Dutch-speaking Flemings and French-speaking Walloons, are embroiled in a rancorous feud over who collaborated with the Nazis, and more compellingly, why.

Words like "complicity", "traitor" and "pariah" reverberate once more around towns and villages as a result of moves by the regional parliament in Flanders to award cash compensation to Flemish men and women convicted as collaborators after the war.

Parliament's vote has opened a traumatic chapter in Belgium's history, causing deep offence to many Walloons and unleashing what local newspapers have called the "demons" of ethnic and linguistic tension seething beneath the surface of Belgian life.

To add insult to injury, the vote was only passed with support from an extreme right-wing Flemish separatist party, the Vlaams Blok.

The compensation bill, known as the Suykerbuyk law, after the Flemish Christian Democrat MP who campaigned for it, could still be overturned by the courts. The Walloon government, which runs the southern, French-speaking part of the country, Francophone political parties, the Walloon parliament and the Walloon cities of Dinant and Bastogne, where memories of wartime bombardment are hilted, have all joined forces to launch a legal challenge. The Belgian senate last week said it would ask the courts to have the measure declared unconstitutional, as only the federal government can legislate for

Belgian Nazi collaborators on trial

war-time matters.

The sense of outrage the bill has awoken may never heal. "Our own people have seen fit to inflict on us a shame more abject than that of the SS," said Arthur Haulot, a Walloon veteran.

"Let us not forget that of the 70,000 Belgian prisoners of war, 67,000 were Walloon, only 3,000 were Flemish," Joss Happart, a Walloon Socialist MP said.

The bill aims to soften the last remaining effects of the harsh laws concerning "repression of collaboration", which were enacted after the war. Mr Suykerbuyk, the bill's sponsor, insists the change is long overdue. "We should have done it 20 years ago," he told *The Independent*. The law would give a token state handout worth around £400 a year to surviving "victims of repression" and their immediate families for the rest of their lives.

To claim this aid, they would have to prove both that their collaboration was small-scale, and that they were impoverished as a direct result of the punishment meted out in the post-war years.

Almost half a million Belgians were investigated for alleged collaboration with the Nazis after the war. Three thousand were condemned to death by military courts. Most had their sentences commuted to prison terms. But 242 went in front of the firing squads.

Tens of thousands of others, many of them Flemish, were branded as collaborators, were jailed or fined and lost their civil rights and property. To this day

"For many it was a question of how to put bread on the table."

The problem is that there were many card-carrying Flemish Nazis, not to mention sympathisers. The wartime Vlaams National Verbond (Flemish national Union) campaigned for the union of Germany, Holland and Flanders. They encouraged Flemish people to guard bridges against saboteurs and join the German army on the eastern Front. There were outright Flemish Nazis, such as Jef Van de Wiele, and a Flemish branch of the SS, whose members flooded the police and gendarmerie in Belgium in the early days of the Occupation.

What the present row has exposed is the fact that many Flemings in 1939 did not see their refusal to defend a country run by a French-speaking elite as "betrayal". They felt no allegiance to a land where their language and rights were suppressed.

Many did not know which was worse - the French-speakers who ran the country, or the Germans, who they hoped would at least redress Flemish grievances.

Hugo Schiltz, a former Belgian deputy prime minister and a leading member of the Volksunie, a moderate Flemish party, says: "The real problem is the blinkered Walloon attitude. Francophones still cannot admit that Flemish collaboration was due in part to the injustices of the time. They go on insisting that Flemish nationalism and Nazism shared the same hideous face."



Leon Degrelle, founder of the fascist Rexist movement, was a French-speaking Walloon

Howard courts Hanson voters

BY ROBERT MILLIKEN
in Sydney

A NEW state government of Queensland formed by the Labor Party was sworn in yesterday, almost a fortnight after an election which rocked Australia over the strong vote for One Nation, a party built on racially divisive policies.

The Labor Party will be able to govern Queensland for the next three years with support from an independent MP and Pauline Hanson's party will play no part in the government, despite winning 11 of the state parliament's 89 seats and capturing 23 per cent of the vote.

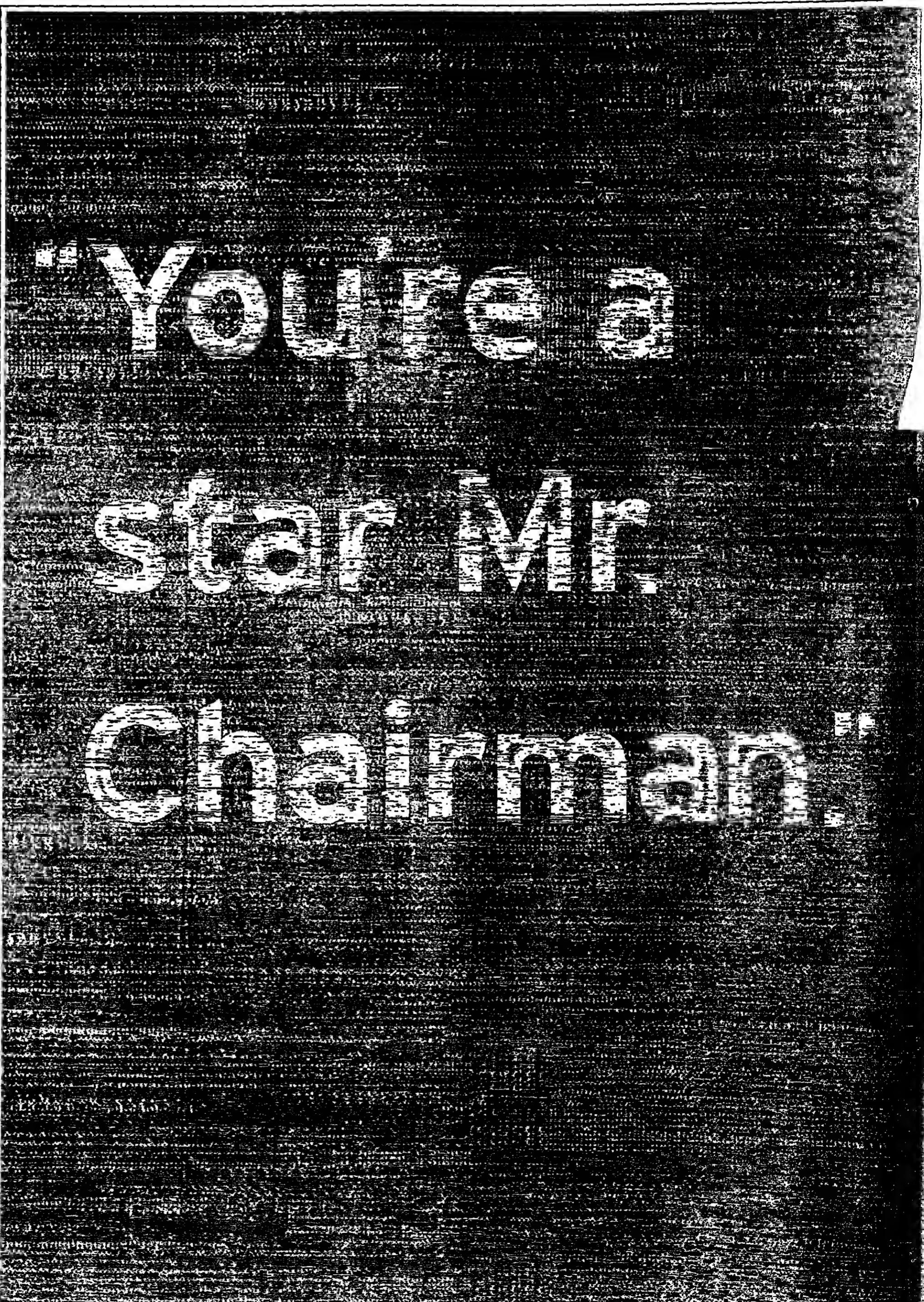
The Prime Minister, John Howard, yesterday went on a speaking tour of rural Queensland to try to win back support from Mrs Hanson's converts. But in doing so, he appeared to sympathise with some of her more controversial policies, opposing Asian immigration and welfare spending on Aborigines.

In a crowded hall in Maryborough, north of Brisbane, Mr Howard said he did not want an Australia where "people of Asian background" felt

unwelcome. But, he added: "I resent, along with a lot of other people in this room, the fact that you haven't been able to talk about immigration in this country for years without being called a racist. I suffered that criticism myself. I suffered that criticism when I attacked the Aboriginal affairs policies of the former government..."

The Prime Minister's remarks drew applause from his conservative audience who, by and large, supported Mrs Hanson's call for abolition of the federal laws that give Aborigines native title rights to traditional lands. Mr Howard's government is trying to amend the law in a way that restricts Aborigines' rights to native title over outback pastoral leases.

The bill is blocked in the Senate, the upper federal house, and Mr Howard has threatened to call a "double dissolution" election of both houses to resolve the issue.



Man who knows the path to heaven



Yoshio Asai, chief priest at the 1,050-year-old Kitano Tenmangu Shinto shrine in Kyoto, which last year attracted 2.6 million visitors Albie Sharpe

JAPAN HAS been in the grips of football mania for more than a week and the 1,050-year-old Kitano Tenmangu Shinto shrine has not been spared.

Yoshio Asai, the chief priest, has met many types of worshippers in his 53 years at the shrine and admits quite a few have been asking the gods to intervene on the Japanese football team's behalf.

At 75, he is still spry and clearly devoted to his job at one of Kyoto's most famous shrines. "My daily life is dedicated to serving the gods with a true heart," he said. With a certain pride he recounts that the shrine holds 120 festivals annually and last year had 2,600,000 visitors.

Sitting in the shrine office, surrounded by ancient relics, photographs of visiting Japanese royalty and sipping endless cups of green tea, he jokes about his working hours: "Usually nine to five, like a typical Japanese salary man". It is hard to imagine Mr Asai, dressed in a white silk kimono shirt and hakama (divided skirt), ever belonging to the

world of suits and commuters.

Shinto, "the way of the gods",

is the ancient polytheistic religion of Japan. Mr Asai defines

Shinto as "the way of showing

devotion to one's parents. The

gods are our ancestors and we

must pray to them with respect

and sincerity".

He trained as a Shinto priest

before the Second World War,

when Shinto was state religion

and Emperor Hirohito

was revered as a living god.

This weekend culminates in

an important date on the

shrine's festival calendar; the

Gokushindan, or birthday festi-

val of Michizane Sugawara,

the 10th-century scholar who is

enshrined at Kitano.

He is the reason why the

shrine is visited by droves of

students. Mr Asai spends a lot

of his time guiding students

around the shrine and ex-

plaining how to pray.

The lead-up to the festival is

keeping him busy. He must

oversee the preparations, and

is worried the rainy season

will interfere with an expected

crowd of 100,000 worshippers.

A week before the festival,

Mr Asai meets the publisher of

his book on the history of the

shrine. He has spent the past

20 years writing the book, which

is to be released at the festival.

ask for my advice on a matter. I don't usually offer spiritual advice, just common sense".

Saturday is Mr Asai's day off. He attends a Rotary club lunch, then he goes on to his annual junior high school year reunion. Later Mr Asai sits down at home to watch Japan's World Cup match against Croatia, with his 68-year-old wife Kazuko.

Shinto priests are permitted to marry. In fact, Mr Asai points out that it is the duty of Shinto followers to produce offspring.

SUNDAY IS the shrine's busiest day. But it is raining again and there are only a few pupils in uniform, wandering around under umbrellas.

Later Mr Asai meets six important shrine parishioners. Most of them run weaving companies in Nishijin, the traditional kimono manufacturing area of Kyoto. They meet occasionally to discuss shrine affairs and festivals but today's conversation centres on the economic recession and how it is affecting the shrine. "The Nishijin companies used to give us large donations," Mr Asai says. "Now it's half the amount." The government will only subsidise half the cost of repairs at Kitano. The rest of the money has to come from donations and other sources.

MR ASAI begins the day as usual, waking at 6am and spending about an hour before breakfast praying at the two altars in his house, to the Gods and to his ancestors. He makes offerings of steamed rice, salt and water. After lighting candles at the altars he receives ritual prayers. He repeats the ritual in the evening, usually before dinner.

After breakfast Mr Asai watches the news and his favourite television drama *Ten Uru* (Beautiful Heaven), the story of a comedian. Mr Asai reaches the shrine at 9.30 and strolls around the grounds, stopping on the way to pray at each of the 50 smaller shrines.

Ten priests under Mr Asai's supervision begin to twist the reeds into the giant wreath. Mr Asai begins his self-purification in preparation for the festival. He must stay within the shrine grounds until after the festival and only eat food cooked at the shrine. He also prepares the offering he will make to Michizane Sugawara for the festival.

More schoolchildren visit the shrine. They want good luck in their exams. Mr Asai chats to them as they watch the reeds being twisted. But talk soon turns from exams to football and the rainy season.

THE DAY dawns clear and the festival begins. The whole area around the shrine is busy, as people bustle around the antique and food stalls. The shrine staff are kept busy, too, selling lucky charms and talismans to ward off epidemics and bad luck.

SALLY McLAREN

French N-tests 'polluted atolls'

FRENCH NUCLEAR testing in the South Pacific has polluted lagoons and atolls with plutonium, according to a report in the *New Scientist* magazine.

The magazine said there were "several kilograms" of the substance in the sediment of the lagoons at the Mururoa and Fangataufa atoll sites, where France carried out 193 atmospheric and underground nuclear blasts between 1966 and 1994.

Quoting a scientific report to the International Atomic Energy Agency, the magazine says plutonium particles have been scattered over the surface of three islands near the main test site on Mururoa.

The study says radioactive tritium is leaking into the lagoons (of the two atolls) from cavities left by underground tests, creating concentrations often 10 times higher than in the open ocean, said the *Dominion* newspaper in Wellington, New Zealand.

FERGAL KEANE

"Throughout his life my father carried the mental scars of his schooldays in the newly independent Irish state"

— THE WEEKEND REVIEW, PAGE 3 →

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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

UK and US defend SA currency

THE BANK of England and the US Federal Reserve intervened in the foreign exchange markets yesterday to defend the South African rand, which had been weakened by strong speculation in the past weeks, according to traders.

The embattled currency spiked up in value as soon as rumours that the two central banks had been selling dollars and buying rands reached the markets, rising from a record low of 5.7875 rand to around 5.70 rand to the dollar.

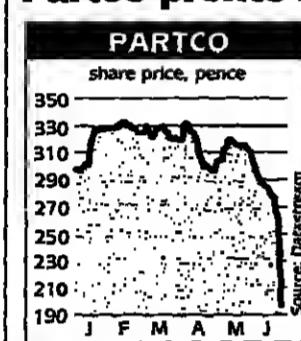
However, it soon retreated to a new low of 5.81, hit by a fresh bout of selling.

Horlick gains role at Parambe



NICOLA HORLICK, the star fund manager who left Morgan Grenfell after a bitter dispute last year and is now at SocGen, is to become non-executive director of the investment company Parambe. The company yesterday bought Gioma, an operator of Latin American-themed restaurants for \$6.3m. Parambe disposed of its art-dealing subsidiary to concentrate on running Gioma's Gauche Grill and Down Mexico Way chains.

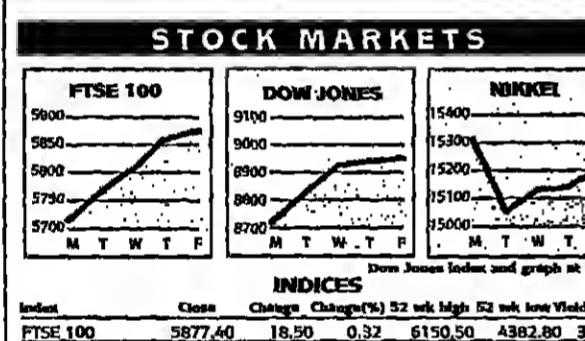
Partco profits hit the brakes



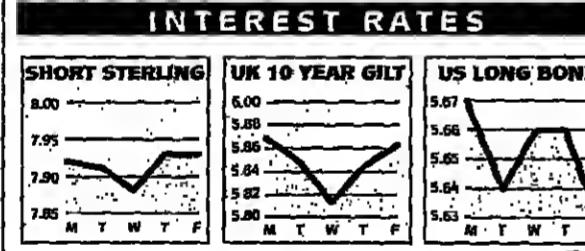
PARTCO GROUP shares slumped 16 per cent yesterday after the UK's largest vehicle parts distributor warned that profits for the first six months of the current year would be below market expectations.

The shares fell 40p to close at 196.5p. The company, which owns 254 vehicle parts distributing companies in the UK, said

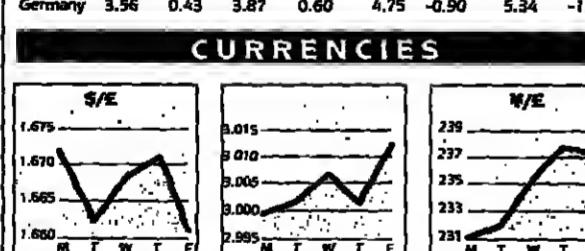
that the mild winter had led to a decrease in demand for brakes and radiators. A decrease in overall demand for commercial vehicle parts and services was also behind the fall in sales.



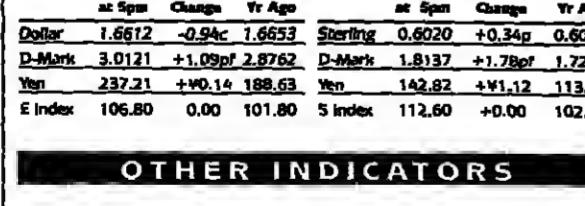
that the mild winter had led to a decrease in demand for brakes and radiators. A decrease in overall demand for commercial vehicle parts and services was also behind the fall in sales.



Interest Rates



Currencies



Other Indicators



Rates for indication purposes only

Go-ahead given for BNFL \$1.2bn US nuclear deal

BY MICHAEL HARRISON AND COLIN BROWN

payers to financial risks, and the Liberal Democrats intend to press for an emergency Commons statement on the deal on Monday.

Matthew Taylor, the Liberal Democrat MP, said: "BNFL have taken over Westinghouse at a bargain basement price because they have agreed to take on the US company's liabilities. The Government must explain what kind of burden this massive US liability is going to place on the British taxpayer."

However, BNFL insisted

that only 10 per cent of the liabilities it was inheriting related to nuclear operations and these had been capped.

The deal will double the size of BNFL, which runs the Sellafield waste reprocessing facility in Cumbria, and make it one of the leading players in nuclear waste reprocessing and plant decommissioning.

Under the deal BNFL and its US partner, the engineering group Morrison Knudsen, will pay \$230m for Westinghouse's nuclear operations and take on \$930m in liabilities and other financial obligations.

BNFL will put up \$70m of the

cash purchase price, giving it a 40 per cent share of the venture, but will assume 60 per cent of the liabilities. However, 90 per cent of the liabilities relate to non-nuclear business, mainly steam generation contracts dating from the 1970s and early 1980s.

The Treasury, which put the deal on hold last weekend, is understood to have been reassured that it will have no effect on public spending or BNFL's External Financing Limit.

The Westinghouse activities that the BNFL/Morrison Knudsen consortium is taking over are its energy systems business, defence-related business

and nuclear clean-up and decommissioning activities.

BNFL will be in charge of the energy systems business which provides nuclear fuel fabrication services, while Morrison Knudsen will take responsibility for the US military work. The clean-up and decommissioning business will be run jointly.

The pressure for a Commons statement was stepped up by Friends of the Earth. Environment minister Michael Meacher's former assistant Ian Wilmore, FOE spokesman, said public financial guarantees on future liabilities might be

Power firms face capacity curbs

BY MICHAEL HARRISON

THE TWO big electricity generators, National Power and PowerGen, could be forced to dispose of a third of their coal-fired stations under proposals to be unveiled next week by the industry regulator.

Professor Stephen Littlechild, the director general of Ofgem, is expected to call for a radical opening-up of the generating market, which could see the two companies obliged to dispose of as much as 8,000 megawatts of capacity.

The regulator's move follows the Government's energy review, which called for plant disposals to increase competition in generation, bring down electricity prices and increase the market for coal.

An Ofgem spokesman said

that Professor Littlechild would

make a statement next week on

the prices in the electricity pool and the market dominance of the generators. "The aim is to increase competition in generation and plant disposal has a role to play in that," he added.

The industry is braced for a more ambitious disposal programme than three years ago when National Power and PowerGen agreed to sell 6,000 megawatts of coal-fired capacity to Eastern in return for the lifting of price controls in the electricity pool.

Professor Littlechild is believed to be looking for several new entrants to come into the generating market to produce real competition. "If he genuinely wants competition then he isn't going to settle for just 2,000 megawatts from each generator," said an executive.

National Power has 13,000 megawatts of coal-fired capacity. PowerGen about 11,000 megawatts and Eastern 6,000 megawatts. Between them they control electricity prices for 90 per cent of the time.

Following the decision to block the construction of most new gas-fired stations, splitting up the generators' coal-fired capacity will be the only way of introducing more competition. However, there is already an estimated 10,000 megawatts of gas-fired capacity either under construction or likely to get consent - enough to displace more than 20 million tons of coal burn and increase gas's market share to nearly 50 per cent.



The Sketchley brand name will live on, but under the ownership of Minit Group

Sketchley quits the high street

BY ANDREW VERITY

SKETCHLEY, the troubled dry-cleaning and business services group, yesterday signalled an end to its high-street presence with the sale of its 620 outlets to the Minit Group for just £1.23m.

John Jackson, the chief executive, resigned as the sale was announced, leaving Sketchley without a chief executive. He was said to be looking to pursue other interests.

The group will be forced to change its name once the sale has been completed. Yesterday it also emerged that profits from Sketchley's retail division were too little to carry on paying the rent on its properties.

Sketchley has a market value of £34m, but in the last

three years has run up losses of £30m. In 1996, Sketchley said it would close 160 outlets in the face of stiff competition. It has struggled to sublet enough of the stores to cover the rents, and many remain closed.

Last July, David Davies, the chairman, announced results which he called "disappointing in the extreme". An expected profit turned into a £4.5m loss after serious accounting errors were discovered. Richard Meyers, then finance director, resigned that day.

In January the group said it was in talks with a mystery bidder for the entire group, but these ended last week.

Sketchley has a market value of £34m, but in the last

against becoming liable for rent on the properties - a bill for up to £50m over the coming years - should the Minit group fail.

Gavin Chittick, finance director of Minit's UK operation, pledged to transform Sketchley into a "services supermarkete", training staff to offer shoe and watch repairs, key cutting and dry cleaning under one roof. He added there were no plans for redundancies in the incident.

Minit Group, the international key-cutting to shoe-repair chain owned by UBS Capital, yesterday said it would keep the Sketchley name as well as its other retail brands, including Supasnaps, Jeeves of Belgrave, Lilliman & Cox and Tothills. It will also guarantee the rump Sketchley business

under another name, the rump Sketchley group will concentrate on business services such as renting out work clothes and contracting for British Telecom. No replacement for Mr Jackson has yet been proposed.

Stock Exchange to probe briefing claim

THE STOCK Exchange is to look into allegations that analysts were selectively briefed earlier this week before downgrading their profit forecasts for Imperial Chemical Industries, writes Andrew Verity.

Shares in ICI continued to fall yesterday, slipping 18p to 979p on the back of suspicions that the group will suffer heavily from the impact of the Asian crisis and exchange rates.

Analysts had been expecting ICI to achieve pre-tax profits of £87m for the year to March 1999. The company is scheduled to report first-quarter results on 13 August.

ICI yesterday dismissed suggestions it may have broken Stock Exchange rules on revealing price sensitive information to selected people.

ITC softens ban on cable TV firms' deals

ITC by Channel One and Live TV, two of the biggest broadcasters on cable, who complained a complete ban could put them out of business.

The television regulator said it would ban deals which guaranteed that new customers were forced to buy a bundle of channels when signing up to a cable company. But it backed down on a crucial plan to extend the ban to existing deals.

Both put out profit forecasts for the full year of £500m. However, Mr Edgar said another broker, Sutherland, had forecast £400m.

The concession removes the threat of legal action against the

viewers until 2005.

The television regulator said it would ban deals which guaranteed that new customers were forced to buy a bundle of channels when signing up to a cable company. But it backed down on a crucial plan to extend the ban to existing deals.

The concession removes the threat of legal action against the

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

LONDON

Worries about Asia and fears of higher interest rates hampered shares but a late flourish produced an 18.5 points Footsie gain to 5,877.4.

In the past four sessions the index has risen 165. The mid cap index was, however, back to losing ways, falling 5.4 to 5,523.3. Standard Chartered, the banking group, was the best performing blue chip, gaining 35.5p to 680.5p on stories a 15 per cent shareholding is changing hands ahead of a bid.

Derek Pain, page 26

NEW YORK

US STOCKS rose yesterday, boosted by optimism that a growing economy with little inflation and low interest rates will increase corporate profits later this year.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 56.05, or 0.6 per cent, to 8,991.63 in mid-morning trading, and the Standard & Poor's 500 Index rose 6.20, or 0.6 per cent, to 1,135.48. The Nasdaq Composite gained 7.05, or 0.4 per cent, to 1,870.36. Merck led the Dow industrials higher. Microsoft recovered from previous selling.

TOKYO

JAPANESE stocks rose on news that the ailing Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan may merge with Sumitomo Trust & Banking Corp, ending unease about LTCB's future.

The Nikkei 225 index rose 77.82 points, or 0.51 per cent, to 15,210.04. The broader Topix index gained 5.29 points, or 0.45 per cent, to 11,903.22.

LTCB surged 15 yen, or 26 per cent, to 73 yen before being suspended, topping the most-active list with 18.6 million shares traded. Sumitomo Trust fell 20 yen, or 3 per cent, to 648 yen before trading was halted.

RUSSIA

THE MARKET tumbled yesterday, with the benchmark RTS index down 5 per cent to a 20-month low on concern that oil production cuts pledged by Opec will not be large enough to boost prices.

The Russian Trading System index fell to 163.99, its lowest level since 3 October 1996. OAO Lukoil Holding, the largest oil producer, fell 5.1 per cent to \$9.20.

Stocks also dropped because talks on an International Monetary Fund emergency loan to the government could take months to finish, analysts said.

FRANCE

THE FRENCH stockmarket reached another closing high yesterday as Wall Street's early trading gains lifted the index in late afternoon after it had been flat for most of the day.

The CAC-40 index finished

هكذا هن ألاصل

Danger of Snook's mobile fantasy

HANS SNOOK, managing director of the Orange mobile phone network, has a dream; it is that one day all the world will be Orange, or at least that "within 10 years the great majority of people will have wire-free telephones", and that perhaps as much as a quarter of them will be Orange subscribers. This might seem like a challenging enough business objective in itself, but there's more. Much, much more.

Many of us might think the mobile phone is already one of the great initiatives of our time, but according to Mr Snook it has so far only begun to scratch the surface of its potential. In a time not too far distant to foreseeable penetration rates of perhaps 150 to 200 per cent. Yes, I had to think about that, too. What it means is that many of us will have more than one mobile phone.

As important, there will be legions of automated mobile phones which, for instance, will remotely inform the supplier that his Coca-Cola vending machine needs replenishing or that there's a problem with the supercool. Oh, and finally, Mr Snook reckons that in 10 years' time, some 90 per cent of all voice telephony will be mobile.

Starry-eyed stuff. The extraordinary thing is that the City seems to have bought the story book, line and sinker. Analysts



JEREMY
WARNER

Extraordinarily, the City seems to have bought Orange's mobile phone story hook, line and sinker

may be entirely right to take the bait in this way: this could indeed be the future. Rather more likely, however, is that it is not - or, certainly, that it won't prove as lucrative for Orange as Mr Snook hopes.

I would rate Orange's chances of meeting its long-term business objectives as at

best 50 per cent and probably a lot lower. To be fair, this is not so far off the probability of success that could be applied to most business plans. The difference is, however, that Orange's share price has begun to anticipate that these objectives will be met in full. There's still a little bit of scepticism left in the price, but not much.

In the last six months the shares have doubled. This week they rocketed into the stratosphere on the back of the company's latest marketing initiative, a tariff-cutting exercise which will make Orange price-competitive with Vodafone, the market leader. Many brokers are saying there's another couple of quid to go at least, which if true would put a stock market value on Orange of more than £5bn. All this for a company whose revenues have only just crossed the £1bn a year mark, that will lose in the region of £70m this year, and whose debt is £1bn and rising.

Maybe the City is right to be optimistic, but here's what I believe might be a more realistic view. After a marked slowdown, the mobile phone market has resumed past rates of steady growth, with net new subscribers rising 27 per cent in the first quarter of this year. It is a statement of the obvious to say that the bigger a market gets,

the harder it becomes to keep up past rates of expansion. Eventually it becomes impossible. But it is certainly true that so far the market has defied the sceptics.

However, in order to reach Orange's projection that 50 per cent of the population will have a mobile by 2004 (Vodafone predicts it will be a year later, but there's pretty much common ground here between the networks), the market is going to have to carry on growing exponentially.

For 30 million people to have a mobile by 2004 requires compound growth of around 25 per cent for the next three years, falling to 20 per cent in the final year. Given that there are only 31 million ordinary fixed phone lines in Britain, of which 2.2 million are business lines, this might seem just a little ambitious. Around 97 per cent of households in Britain have a phone, but the number of fixed lines per head of population has yet to achieve anywhere near the 50 per cent level. Orange reckons will occur in mobiles over the next five years.

It is one thing to be sceptical about achievable growth rates, but perhaps as important is the quality of those going mobile.

About half of net new subscribers right now are "pre-paid", a comparatively new area

of the market which allows the subscriber to pre-pay for a certain amount of mobile usage. As yet it is unclear precisely how this new type of subscriber is going to behave. Obviously there's less credit risk with such people, but by the same token they seem not to spend nearly as much as ordinary subscribers. Furthermore, this part of the market might be quite small and quickly reach saturation point. In any case, the present apparently high rate of growth in net new subscribers may be misleading.

To return to the specific case of Orange, the company has had to change its marketing pitch markedly to stay with the pack. Throughout 1996 into the early part of last year, Orange was showing 40 per cent-plus growth in net new subscribers, but this rate of growth then began to fall and by the final quarter of last year it was less than 18 per cent. Meanwhile the others were continuing to power ahead. Even One2One showed growth in the same quarter of nearly 30 per cent. Plainly the Sainsbury-like approach being adopted by Orange - the belief that people are prepared to pay more for a higher quality product - wasn't working. That was the backdrop to this week's announcement by Mr Snook that he is entering the price war with a vengeance.

So even if Mr Snook is right about growth in the mobile market, the networks may have to slash their tariffs down to commodity price levels to get there. Certainly if mobile is ever going to take 90 per cent of voice traffic, it will have to be price competitive with fixed-line telephony.

Things may change, but for the time being such a pricing strategy could not be made economic. On average, each mobile subscriber is subsidised to the tune of £200 for the initial cost of his handset. If this money is not clawed back through tariffs, how else are the mobile networks going to get their money back?

It seems to me that Orange, and to a more limited extent the other mobile operators as well, have created a real problem for themselves here. Rather than have the market base its judgement on what management knows to be achievable, they have allowed investors to buy into their dreams.

To base any stock market valuation on what the world might look like even five years down the line, let alone 10, is always madness. The best Mr Snook can hope for is that he will meet stock market expectations. Much more probable is that he will disappoint them.

IN BRIEF

Hays buys three French agencies

HAYS, the business services group, yesterday bought Alpha IT, Aret and Quasar, three specialist recruitment agencies in France, for FFr19.3m (£19.5m).

Hays also spent £2.2m to buy Delta Medical Express Group, a courier company with operations in Belgium and France.

BAA in US move

BAA, the airport operator, yesterday won a 15-year contract to run shops at two terminals in New Jersey's Newark Airport, and plans to invest \$7m (£4m) to expand the number of shops by 20 per cent.

Staff cuts in HK

JARDINE FLEMING Group, the troubled Hong Kong-based joint venture of Flemings, the British investment bank, yesterday dismissed 40 of its fund management staff in a bid to cut costs in the face of the Asian turmoil. The cuts come after a review of the firm's fund-management business the company said.

New UBS opens

THE new UBS, formed from the merger of Swiss Bank Corp and Union Bank of Switzerland, will begin operating on Monday, the group said yesterday. It will have 4,300 employees in London, around 50 per cent more than expected.

Media merger

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry yesterday cleared the acquisition by Southnews of Informer Publications and the Yellow Advertiser newspaper group, part of the United News and Media group.

Claremont loss

CLAREMONT Garments, the clothes producer which supplies Marks & Spencer, yesterday blamed a poor operating performance and high disposal costs for a near-threefold rise in pre-tax losses to £12m in 1997, against a loss of £4.2m in 1996, on flat sales of £186m.

Phone takeover

CALL-NET Enterprises, the Canadian telecoms group, is to buy long-distance rival Fonorola for an agreed C\$1.8bn (£700m).



Northern buys maker of Poppets for £10m

LONG-TERM CREDIT Bank (LTCB), the troubled Japanese bank, yesterday looked set to be merged with one of its rivals in an attempt to stave off bankruptcy.

Suzumoto Trust & Banking confirmed it was considering merging with LTCB after being approached by the embattled Japanese bank earlier this week. Negotiations began yesterday. Sumitomo said, adding that no deadline had been set on reaching an agreement.

Atsushi Takahashi, Sumitomo's president, said: "The authorities have told us they'll give the merger their full support."

The news was broadly welcomed by the market, which saw the development as further

BY LEA PATERSON

evidence of the Japanese government's willingness to face up to the country's continuing financial crisis.

"It appears policy makers are finally hitting the bullet on troubled banks," said Michael Scarlatos at Bankers Trust New York. However, analysts were quick to point out that mergers were, on their own, not enough to sort out Japan's banking problems. The market is looking for far-reaching structural reforms to Japan's financial system, analysts said.

The yen steadied at around

142 to the dollar, while the Nikkei closed up 77.82 points at 15,210.04.

Under the terms of the merger deal under discussion,

LTCB, with assets of around 262 trillion yen (£110bn), specialises in making long-term loans to Japanese firms.

However, revenues from these types of loans have dried up after clients sought cheaper means of financing via the capital markets threatening the long-term health of LTCB and similar banks.

LTCB is currently struggling with around 1.4 trillion yen of bad debt and has seen its credit ratings cut to just above junk bond level. Its shares have plunged from 300 yen in March to just 50 yen earlier this week. Yesterday its shares rose to 73 yen before being suspended.

Sumitomo's shares fell on the news by 20 yen to 648 yen before being suspended.

Separately, Dai-Ichi Corporation filed an application with the Tokyo District Court for liquidation, said Japanese media reports. Dai-Ichi, said to have bad debts of 413.5 billion yen, is Japan's 13th-largest failure in the post-war period.

Sumitomo would only take on

LTCB's performing debts, with LTCB's bad debts likely to transfer to Japan's new "bridge bank". The bridge bank - which is expected to manage the bad debts of struggling financial institutions - is believed to be a key feature of Japan's eagerly awaited plans for financial reform.

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With its echoes of the days of empire through its middle and Far Eastern banking network, Standard is regarded as a desirable capture for a group

other non-core businesses.

The proceeds of the sale will be used to buy tea plantations in Sri Lanka, the company said. Photograph: Mykel Nicolaou

Japanese banks set to merge

BY LEA PATERSON

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Way clear for Amex, Nasdaq to merge

NASDAQ, the second-largest US stock exchange, was yesterday given the green light for its proposed merger with Amex, the third-largest US exchange, writes Lea Paterson.

Separately, the French and Spanish derivatives exchanges announced their intention to cooperate, a development seen by many as further evidence of the trend towards consolidation of financial exchanges.

Members of the American Stock Exchange (Amex) voted

by 622 to 206 in favour of the merger with Nasdaq, comfortably above the two-thirds majority required. The exchanges announced plans to join forces earlier this year.

Charles Balfour, managing director of Nasdaq International, said: "It's very good news for them and it's very good news for us. It will help shape the future of the securities market in the global marketplace."

At the end of 1997, 5,466

companies were listed on Nasdaq, with a total value of £1.65bn. Amex had 733 firms with a total value of £1.03bn.

Their combined US equity market share will be 47 per cent.

The Nasdaq/Amex merger, which will include the Philadelphia Stock Exchange, will give the exchanges a combined market share of 50 per cent.

Mr Balfour declined to comment on the "talks about talks" between Nasdaq and Deutsche

Börse, the German exchange.

The two are understood to be considering linking systems and initiating joint marketing, but are thought unlikely to agree a full merger.

Meanwhile Matif, Monep and Meff, the French and Spanish derivatives exchanges, said they planned to create a partnership called Euro Globex. A spokeswoman for Liffe, London's futures and options exchange, said it had no plans to link with any other exchange.

Credit Lyonnais urged a switch out of J Sainsbury, up 6.5p to 554.5p into Asda, up 2.75p to 207.75p, or Tesco, up 4.5p to 376p; the latter is taking analysts to see its Irish operations next week.

Gallaher, the tobacco group, was puffed up higher at 317.5p on Dresdner Kleinwort Benson support; the company meets analysts on Monday.

Cable & Wireless Communications' recent headlong charge came to an end with the shares easing 12p to 584.5p.

Henderson Crustwhale moved its target price to 650p using the AT&T bid with Tele-Communications Inc, America's biggest cable company, as a yardstick.

Last month a Canadian group said a 14.25 per cent stake at 450p.

Recruitment group Robert

Walters added 18p to 423.5p

after Killik said the fall from a

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Philip Rogerson (right), the former deputy chairman of British Gas, is to become the next chairman of Viridian, the parent company of Northern Ireland Electricity.

Mr Rogerson was the executive responsible for putting BG's case to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission during its long and bitter battle over prices with the gas industry regulator, Claremont of Ofgas.

He also helped to oversee the demerger of British Gas into the trading and supply business, Centrica, and the pipeline, storage and exploration arm, BG.

Prior to joining British Gas, Mr Rogerson was general manager finance at ICI. His current boardroom posts include the deputy chairman's job at International Public Relations.

Mr Rogerson will take over

from the current Viridian chairman, David Jefferies, on 1 January next year. Mr Jefferies, chairman of the National Grid, has held the Viridian post for the past four years.

Prior to joining British Gas, Mr Rogerson was

SPORT

جذب من الأصل

No one's been round to check I'm not dead

AFTER 42 games in 18 days we have now reached the stage in this World Cup tournament where the Optrex has to be bought in bulk and the fake tan deployed to disguise the deathly pallor. Despite the permanently drawn curtains nobody from the Social Services has been round to check that I am not dead on the couch. But I can at least be grateful that my telly does not boast a wide flat screen nor quadraphonic sound. Watching Belgium move slowly across 32 inches of irradiated glass with David Pleat screaming at you from the four corners of the living room cannot be a life-enhancing experience.

The past week has been one of departures, of bags packed, of frustrated dreams. Those who travelled

STAN HEY



VIEW FROM
THE
ARMCHAIR

to France in hope seeing themselves as stylish contributors to a great festival have had their inadequacies punished. But now we know that Barry cannot get through to the final having lost out to Motty on the "away vowels rule" - "Oh! Oh! Gooaaal!" and that's before the excitement. Barry at least has a chance of reaching the semi-finals

but I fear that some of the other minnows will not go much further than the second round.

Gubba has been in the World Cup on several occasions now and always promises to come through without ever being good enough to do so. Drawn to an apparently easy group, Gubba just failed to show the right sort of spark early doors and ended up pointless. After accumulating more than a dozen red cards for dour and elusive language it will come as some relief if Waddle is expelled from the tournament. Meanwhile Chin didn't really deserve to qualify after many human rights abuses - torturing prisoners with non-stop opinion - but was able to sneak some results thanks to a series of strange refereeing decisions. The authorities

are still awaiting the results of a urine test on McCoist.

In the other half of the draw, the Venisons put on an unexpectedly educated display in a fetching new kit of restrained beige, while the ageing Mediterranean squad of Bigron seem rejuvenated, despite falling foul of Fifa's new ban on match-day jewellery. But some fierce tackling from behind and blatant dissent may have paid to the chances of Fergie progressing much further. The hot favourites, Moore and Keegan, have disappointed so far but may be saving their worst for later. Their interplay has been mostly on the predictable side - too many missed passes, not enough excitement and an inability to read the game.

This means that a couple of the unfancied dark horses Drury and Tydenley could yet sneak through but that is probably a bit of a long shot. The longer this tournament goes on the less chance there is of taking risks. There wasn't even that much to choose between what we had expected to be the strongest overseas teams, with Ginola and Gullit finishing level on points but with many fewer goals scored than expected. It may yet just be that, as we Brits have always suspected, these foreign outfit don't travel well.

Looking ahead, the quarter-finalists seem sure to include Lynn, Hansen, Lineker and O'Neill from the top half of the draw. O'Neill, in particular, has played with great

freedom and seems capable of putting together several effective attacks. So knocking out Chin is a distinct possibility and would surely be good for the game. Lynn has been a bit careless at the back but hasn't really been stretched yet, while Lineker has been playing at a nice tempo but may need to up it to go all the way.

But in the bottom half of the draw

I can see some real upsets on the cards. My fear that Wilson may yet

make a shock exit, with Rosenthal coming through in a dramatic

shoot-out. Wilson tends to play with a flat back four and a sweeper, with nothing much in midfield or indeed up front for that matter. Such a dull, cautious approach could yet bring about a humiliating defeat at the

hand of younger, fitter rivals. Don't rule out Reggae Boy Barnes for top honours either.

A similar fate to Wilson's proba-

bly awaits Robson, whose legs may

have gone after too many previous tournaments and is prone to losing it in midfield. If they are drawn together don't be surprised if the audience switches off. Meanwhile the Venables need to improve their communication, because it is not always easy to understand what game they are trying to play, or indeed whose side they are on.

So, just 16 games left to go and it's

still all to play for. At the end of the day, there can only be one winner; and 15 losers. But today, I really must

get some exercise and change the battery in my remote control.

European Cup: Individual talent can help Britain's defence of trophy but injuries undermine visit to St Petersburg



Peter Jay

A high-stepping Nathan Morgan stretches out at his Leicester track during training for this weekend's European Cup in St Petersburg, where he hopes to 'produce the goods' for Britain

Morgan in pursuit of Lynn the Leap

FOUR YEARS ago, British triple jumping was not an outstandingly interesting area of the sport. How swiftly things can change. We now find ourselves with the men's world record holder, in Jonathan Edwards, and the women's indoor world record holder, in Ashia Hansen.

Why certain events ignite for Britain at certain times remains a mystery, although the catalyst is always an outstanding performer. Which brings us to the long jump, which also brings us to Nathan Morgan.

This morning, this 19-year-old from Leicester faces the biggest challenge of his fledgling athletic career as Britain's representative in the European Cup in St Petersburg. He goes into the competition with the words of Britain's athletics performance director, Max Jones, ringing in his ears.

"Nathan will produce the goods this year," said Jones at last week's team selection announcement. "This could be the guy who is going to take British jumping into world class. I think he will be the one to break Lynn Davis's British record."

Pressure? What pressure?

Sensibly, Morgan steps back from making any wild predictions about when - or even if - he will surpass the mark of 8.23 metres which has eluded every other British jumper since it was set in 1968. Yes, 1968, year of the Mexico Olympics, which goes to show what an outstanding athlete the 1964 Olympic champion was.

"People ask me when I'm going to break his record," Morgan said with a hint of a chuckle. "When it happens, it happens. I know I've got a lot more to come."

As he well knows, many have travelled the hopeful road before him. Seven years ago, the preciously talented Stewart Faulkner appeared to have positioned himself within reach of the domestic summit with a leap of 8.15 metres, still the furthest any

British athlete other than Davies has achieved. But Faulkner, ultimately, proved too fragile a talent. A year later, a more rambunctious character, the Irishman Mark Forsythe, managed 8.14. He, too, found Lynn the Leap beyond his reach, however.

Morgan is the obvious new talent in the event, a fact that he formally announced when he became European junior champion. His winning distance in Ljubljana - 7.90m - stands as his best, although he procured a wind-assisted effort

of 8.04m at the same venue earlier this season. Realistically, 8.23 is far off. But as he is approaching tomorrow's challenge with clear goals in mind, "This will be the biggest competition I've ever done," he said. "I'm going to be going for big jumps. I'm expecting to be over eight metres."

After two years of domestic domination, Morgan welcomed the opportunity to extend himself going into St Petersburg. A month ago, there was talk of Colin Jackson claiming the long jump spot in addition to the hurdles, but injury and cancelled events means the Welshman has been unable to jump this season.

Morgan, however, was uncon-

cerned about that possibility. "I didn't think the selectors would pick Colin for the long jump," he said. "Even if he had got a jump in. Because I am better than him."

Money from the National Lottery - and additional assistance from the ubiquitous benefactor, Sir Eddie Kulukundis - has enabled this Birchfield Harrier to train full time for the past two years. The 30 hours a week jobs in local grocery stores are a thing of the past.

Earlier this year he went warm weather training in Tallahassee along with his coach, Darryl Bunn, who also coaches Britain's world heptathlon silver medallist, Denise Lewis.

It is a set-up which is working well for the boy who used to get under the feet of the senior athletes at Leicester's Saffron Lane track after being taken down to the club by his father as a promising eight-year-old.

Natural speed - the essential pre-requisite for any jumper nowadays - has been harnessed to the event which he took to best in inter-school and county competitions.

His ambitions extend beyond St Petersburg, naturally enough, to this season's European Championships and Commonwealth Games. The latter competition, he believes, looks set up for Jamaica's James Beckford. "He is a class above anyone else," Morgan said.

"But I have seen the best people in Europe. And they haven't got anything that I haven't got."

That's the spirit. Watch this space.

Britain's chance to lift spirits

BY MIKE ROWBOTTOM

IT HAS BEEN a very long year since Linford Christie plunged into the mass of British athletic supporters at Munich's Olympic Stadium, brandishing the European Cup which his team had just recaptured after an interval of nine years.

Within four months, Britain's incomparable sprinter had retired, along with his fellow Olympian champion of 1992, Sally Gunnell, and British athletics had gone bankrupt.

The men who defend the trophy in St Petersburg this weekend form the least experienced British team in the event's history. Their task was made all the more difficult by the injuries which obliged three proven performers to drop out in midweek - the Olympic high jump bronze

medalist Steve Smith, the UK pole vault record holder Nick Buckfield, and the European javelin champion Steve Backley.

The void left by Christie - whose record of 13 individual European Cup victories is unmatched - has been partly filled by his old friend and training partner Colin Jackson, who is doubling up to add the 200 metres to his customary high hurdle commitment.

That was a controversial decision given the number of talented young sprinters Britain has to choose from right now, but Max Jones, Britain's performance director, stressed that Jackson, the world 110 metres hurdles record holder, had been picked because he could be relied upon to "produce the goods on the day".

Frustrated as the young sprinters may have been, their contem-

poraries in other events have been given ample opportunities to introduce themselves to the wider world through this point-scoring competition in the way Robert Hough did in Munich as he won the 3,000 metres steeplechase in what was his international debut.

Hough is injured this year, so another debutant, Ben Whithy, comes into the event. Other first-timers include Anthony Borsumato in the 400 metres hurdles, Kari Kesika, a US-based 5,000 metres runner, and Nathan Morgan, the 19-year-old European junior long jump champion.

In naming his original team, Jones was upbeat about the forthcoming task. "I will be disappointed if we don't win," he said. "I will be really disappointed if we don't qualify for the World Cup." Only the top two men's and women's teams

will qualify for that lucrative event in South Africa on 11 to 13 July. But Britain's chances of making the trip have dipped in the face of strong opposition from Germany - still triple from defeat on home soil last year - Italy, and the hosts, Russia.

The women's team, third last year, will also have an uphill struggle to contest a World Cup place with the favourites, Russia, and strong-looking Germany, France, Czech and Italian selections.

Apart from Gunnell, they are also missing the world indoor triple jump record holder Ashia Hansen, 1500m runner Kelly Holmes and world heptathlon silver medalist Denise Lewis, who are all nursing injuries. One leading figure who is fit, the world cross country silver medalist, Paula Radcliffe, will double up over 1500 and 5,000 metres.

As David Moorcroft, the chief executive of the at present intermediate UK athletics body, strives to get the domestic sport back on track, another victory would be timely indeed in terms of morale. Realistically, however, that is unlikely.

Spirits are likely to be raised by some individual flourishes, however, with much expected from Jackson, Mark Richardson in the 400 metres, the European indoor 3,000 metres champion John Maycock in the 1500 metres, and the men's 4x400 metres team.

For the women, Radcliffe is expected to shine and sentiment dictates a satisfactory outing for Judy Oakes, the veteran shot-putter who is taking part in her 10th cup final - more than anyone else in the history of the competition.

Graf's sad exit may not be final

BY JOHN ROBERTS

AT 4.12PM precisely at Wimbledon, where keeping time has been a problem during a week of rain, Steffi Graf gave a little wave to the crowd with her left hand as she walked off the Centre Court. The seven-times champion was unable to say whether it was a gesture of farewell, or merely *auf wiedersehen*.

Unlike her compatriot Boris Becker, who announced his retirement from the Grand Slam championships on leaving the great arena after losing to Pete Sampras in the quarter-finals last year, Graf kept her options open.

"It's a long year right now," she said. "I definitely couldn't say right now at the point. It would be nice to play [here] again, and hopefully be in different shape and enjoy myself. But I've learned enough to take what's coming next. So I don't know."

While it would be inappropriate to suggest that any player ought to be singled out to put paid to Graf's Wimbledon campaign — perhaps for ever — if any opponent deserved a break against the great German it was Natasha Zvereva.

Ten years ago, following their first match, which happened to be the final of the French Open, Zvereva was finally reduced to tears in the interview room after attempting to put a brave face on a 6-0, 6-0 defeat in little more than 30 minutes, one of the swiftest executions in the history of the sport.

Matters hardly improved for

the elegant but inconsistent player from Belarus when Graf crossed her court, usually with a booming forehand. Before yesterday, Graf led their head-to-head 17-0. Zvereva, moreover, had won only three of the 37 sets played.

Nobody beats Zvereva 18 times, to paraphrase Vitas Gerulaitis and Brad Gilbert, both of whom used the quote in reference to a nemesis of their own.

So what made the difference yesterday, when Zvereva prevailed, 6-4, 7-5 after 77 minutes? The answer is a combination of Zvereva's self-belief and Graf's lack of it.

For once, Zvereva played

against Graf as if she was determined to give it her best without worrying about the consequences. Her game was smart, one of steady serving, accurate, penetrating groundstrokes at the precise moment and low backhand slices which were a match for Graf's at her best.

The performance was similar to the one Zvereva gave in making the 18-year-old American Venus Williams look more of a novice than she is on grass when they met at Eastbourne, en route to the All England Club.

Graf, nervous throughout, as indicated by six double-faults, was unable to break her opponent's serve. Indeed, she managed to create only three break points: one during the second game of the match, and the other two as Zvereva served to win it.

There was drizzle in the air as Zvereva hit a backhand to

the corner of the court to convert her second break point in the opening game, having missed the first by directing a forehand wide. The effect such an early success had on her game — and also on Graf's — was crucial to what unfolded, Graf becoming increasingly unsure of herself, Zvereva realising that a long-awaited victory was there for the taking — so long as she did not keep reminding herself of the fact.

Graf saved the first set point when serving at 5-3, Zvereva contributing to the reprieve by netting a forehand. Zvereva left little margin for error on the second opportunity in the next game, hitting an unreturnable serve to secure the set after only 33 minutes.

Although Graf's form showed a distinct improvement after she managed to hold serve to love in the opening game of the second set, she remained unable to exert sufficient pressure for Zvereva to feel under any sort of real threat until the concluding game.

By that time, Zvereva had made the breakthrough, 6-5. Graf's game having become as sombre as the clouds overhead. She belted a wild forehand wide to present her opponent with two break points, and netted a backhand on the second after Zvereva returned a serve.

"I didn't play my best out there," Graf said. "I started off really nervously, didn't move very well around the court, and didn't return very well. I didn't really find a way to go for my shots, and at the important points I didn't play well at all."

Having played comparatively little competitive tennis since undergoing surgery to her left knee after last year's French Open, Graf is clearly finding it difficult to slip back into her customary dominating mode.

"I haven't really been very relaxed the last few days," she said. "I've not been feeling very comfortable out there. Every time I went on the court, I played nervously in the beginning and I didn't feel my rhythm at all. So my problem is pretty clear; it's lack of match practice."

Zvereva said, "I think it's by far the best match of my life. I was mentally tough on every point and I don't think that has ever happened before. I can drift in and out of matches easily, but this time I stayed with it."

Shortly before declaring herself fit for Wimbledon, the 29-year-old Graf had expressed fears that persistent injury problems might force her to retire. She has won 21 Grand Slam singles titles, three short of the record held by Australia's Margaret Court.

Whether her body will stand up to further punishment remains to be seen, but for the moment she intends to play on, hoping to sharpen her fitness and form in time for the United States Open at the end of August.

"I've got exhibitions in about two weeks or so, and I'll see from then on. I've got San Diego and some other tournaments planned. I'll just play from match to match."

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Steffi Graf hits out yesterday en route to a first defeat in 18 meetings with Natasha Zvereva Robert Hallam



Natasha Zvereva shows her jubilation at her win over Steffi Graf Robert Hallam

Krajicek displays a new maturity

A Dutch former champion looks a potential title-winner again, injuries permitting. By Richard Edmondson

RICHARD KRAJICEK'S fitness trainer flew in yesterday to treat the 1996 champion's left knee. Yet many believe that it is not medicine or scalpel that can help the giant Dutchman, rather that he needs someone to treat the space between his temples.

You know how the New York police feel as Godzilla conducted his traffic violations when Krajicek was at the top of his game. He is huge, and he is unstoppable. On other occasions, however, he can be as ferocious and sturdy as a butterfly.

The identity of the character on the other side of the net has little to do with Krajicek's result. It is more how the chemicals are mixing in the man's mind. When it is windy, so is he. "You can tell immediately, as soon as he comes out before a game," says one who knows him well.

"Sometimes he is strong and concentrating and at other times he looks up at the sky with

a funny look on his face. Then you know he has no chance."

The odd expression belonged to New Zealand's Brett Steven in the first round when Krajicek produced tennis almost as sublime as in his championship year. It was not until the Dutchman's sixth service game that he surrendered his first point on delivery. "I played very good for the first set and a half against Steven," Krajicek said. "I think I've had my moments, but it's a long way to go."

Statistics suggest this was

not a unique occurrence. Krajicek led the tour in first serve

points won last year (86 per cent), at the same time sending down 97 aces. It is a useful skill to possess at Wimbledon.

The immediate future looks

bright; it looks orange in fact, if you consider the big man's draw. The 28-year-old can chart a path to the semi-finals without meeting a fellow seed, and the highest-ranked figure in his half is the No 11 seed Jonas Bjorkman. This path of rose petals is not, however, the advantage it might be with Krajicek.

In the Netherlands they reel off the number of times their man has self-destructed from apparently advantageous draws. It is said he needs tough assignments to concentrate his mind and progress. The year Krajicek became the first Dutchman to win a Grand Slam singles title here in SW19. He beat Stich and Sampras along the way and dropped just a single set in the championship.

Krajicek also seemed to forget about the injuries that have been a regular dandruff throughout his career. Andre Agassi once said that the man "starts limping even if he looks at a court". The man to be fair, has done more than his allotted time under anaesthetic. He has damaged a shoulder, suffered tendinitis in both knees and, last year, he underwent arthroscopic surgery on his right knee to repair a torn meniscus. The other knee will receive similar treatment very soon. He is on painkillers.

Agassi has also opined that "Crackjack" will win Wimbledon again this year and be piled up with prizes on Sunday week.

Krajicek himself thinks it would be improper to argue with his

fellow former champion. He is a more mature figure these days following the arrival of his daughter, Emma, in March to enlarge the family unit he has formed with Daphne Deckers, his television presenter partner.

His public relations has also come on a bundle and he no longer feels the need to refer to the athletes of the women's tour as "fat, lazy pigs". "They may be doing even better than the men," he says. "They get a lot of attention and I think it is logical. In the end it is good to see. If there is a change to women's tennis it is automatically good for the men's game."

Now, finally, is the time to discover if his game has matured at a comparable rate with his sexual politics. In the third round he faces Germany's Nicola Kiefer. "In general, I think my game has improved since I won the championship," he says. "I am more



Krajicek: In right mood

consistent and make more returns and, at the moment, I feel very concentrated and very focused. I think I have a higher level of play, but I don't think I've reached the way I played in the second week again. But I have won it before, so I know what it's like to win."

Court circular

EDITED BY IAN TASKER

Sweet dream of success

AFTER HOURS of watching Wimbledon either courtside or on the television, most tennis fans have at some time or another closed their eyes and imagined beating Navratilova in the final 10-8 in the third or piping Sampras to the title in five sets. Take away the tennis legends from these fantasies, become a member of the British Women's Tennis Association and in true Jim'll Fix It style your dreams could become reality.

Sue Livingstone, president of the BWTA, which will celebrate its 25th anniversary next year, explained: "We run 60 to 70 events for women of all ages and standards. The biggest thing we organise is for ladies of club standard who don't usually play competitive tennis called the Tate and Lyle Ladies Doubles Masters."

"It's a series of one-day events staged all over the country with the winning pairs in each area coming to compete in the final rounds here at the All England club."

Before potential competitors have images of themselves skipping around Centre Court, however, it has to be said the competition is held in October and the finale takes place at the covered courts. But if the thought of winning a Tate and Lyle silver sugar shaker is not enough to lure women on to the courts, then nothing is.

Queuers should take their cue from Popes

FANCY A spot of overnight queuing to get a glimpse of your favourite star on Centre Court?

Mother and daughter Louise and Molly Pope offer the following tips: a tent is the first essential item say the women who are in line for the 10th year in succession.

"A dome tent is the best," explains Molly, "because you don't need any pegs. And string," adds Louise, "to anchor the tent to the railings when it gets windy."

Earplugs are also a must. "At Gate 5 the traffic is noisy and everyone parties all night," says the 27-year-old from Torquay.

Everybody needs friends but no one needs them more than an overnighter. The idea is to turn it in turns to come back out to the queue to guard your place and your possessions.

The hazardous trip to the toilet in the middle of the night is also made easier if you bring a torch. A moment's reflection and they amend that to: "A torch and some toilet paper."

Along with the sleeping bag, a miniature TV and folding chairs, a mobile phone is vital. Apparently if the trip into Wimbledon Village for food is too daunting, the local Pizza Hut will deliver.

Jane Marlow



The groundstaff pull the tarpaulins across the grass for the umpteenth time this year Robert Hallam

DEEDS OF THE SEEDS

Men's singles		Women's singles
Holder: Pete Sampras (United States)	Holder: Martina Hingis (Switzerland)	
1 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 2 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	1 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 2 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	
2 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 3 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	2 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 3 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	
3 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 4 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	3 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 4 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	
4 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 5 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	4 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 5 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	
5 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 6 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	5 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 6 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	
6 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 7 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	6 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 7 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	
7 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 8 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	7 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 8 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	
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10 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 11 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	10 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 11 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	
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14 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 15 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	14 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 15 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	
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21 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 22 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	21 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 22 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	
22 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 23 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	22 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 23 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	
23 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 24 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3	23 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) vs 24 HINGIS (Box Makarovna of Russia) 6-3, 6-3</	

Hingis plays hit and giggle

BY GUY HODGSON

TAKEN THE time to visit a Martina Hingis press conference and you are struck by something different. Giggle. If you call them, it's so hard to remember in an environment where so many of the leading ladies are labouring through a morass of difficulties.

"I made it tough for myself," Giggle. "It wasn't an outstanding performance from my side." Smirger: "Maybe tomorrow is a better day." Guffaw. What is wrong with the girl? Doesn't she know that playing tennis is supposed to be a deeply traumatic business?

She only has to ask Steffi Graf, Monica Seles or Jennifer Capriati to explore the darker side of hitting a ball over a net. Or, rather, the side issues that come with it, can be next door to hell if not actually in it.

Gladly, at 17, Hingis is unaffected by the strains of being a tennis player upon whom expectation is piled in layers. Of course she is a young girl having fun; on court... well, she is so good, the fact that her mind wants nothing more than to play tennis.

Usually. The French Open was the exception. Faced by Venus Williams, an 18-year-old seemingly placed on this earth with a mission to displace Hingis at the top of the women's game, the Swiss girl was magnificent. There she won a hard, straight-set victory, the sort that sends

a message to both participants.

In the next match against Monica Seles, whom Hingis had beaten five times in succession, the motivation was not there. She knew she could beat her. Except this was a Seles who was fired by the death of her father to do something significant. Exit Hingis. This time the natural talent could not compensate for complacency.

In a minor scale the same subplot has been played out at Wimbledon. Hingis lost sleep over her first match against the world No 19, Lise Raymond, and sailed past relatively untroubled. In the second round she began so poorly against Elena Makarova that her normally garrulous mother, Melanie

Molitor, was red-faced and silent.

"I was a little bit surprised by the way she played," Hingis said. "She didn't miss one first serve in the first couple of games and she was very fast. She could hold on to the speed of my game and I tried to hit harder and harder and the balls were flying all over the place."

The real problem was not Makarova, it was Hingis. Sometimes she is brilliant, sometimes the feet are static and she is about as mobile as the wax dummy of her likeness being built by Madame Tussaud's, to be unveiled in London by the end of the summer (the only other tennis players on show, by the way, are Boris Becker and Martina Navratilova).

ing Jana Novotna in the final.

"I was happy to reach the quarters, the semi," she said. "All of a sudden I was in the final playing Novotna. I didn't expect to do so well at Wimbledon, I kept saying, 'I don't really like playing on grass', but I kept winning."

This time there's more pressure. I know I can play on the surface and I really want to do well. Now I'm the favourite. [Anna] Kournikova is not in. [Mary] Pierce has lost and nobody knew what was going to happen with Steffi [Graf]. It feels quite different."

She finished by saying it felt good to be in such a position. Like Graf and Navratilova, the expectation seems to propel her to a higher plane. File



Hingis: Happy with life

Edwards
back on
bench at
Broncos

RUGBY LEAGUE

BY DAVE HADFIELD

WHEREVER YOU look, it is a big weekend for scrum-halves, both established and emerging, in Super League. Great Britain's three leading specialists in what remains the most influential position on the field all make fresh starts of various sorts, even if Shaun Edwards sits out the first match of his return to the London Broncos at Halifax tonight.

Edwards is struggling with a chest injury, so with Glen Air also out with a knee problem, Tony Currie has named Damien Chapman and the returning John Timut at half-back. The temptation to use Edwards for at least part of the match will be strong, however.

Halifax will be without the suspended Kelvin Skerrett but his and Edwards' former Wigan team-mate, Martin Hall, has joined them until the end of the season.

The Great Britain scrum-half, Bobbie Goulding, returns to St Helens' starting line-up against Salford, with Sean Long becoming stand-off and Tommy Martyn moving for the first time, to loose forward.

"I thought Bobbie came on and did a few things at Sheffield when the people around him weren't doing much," said his coach, Shaun McRae, who dropped him a month ago. "I'll get him in. Tommy and Sean on the field at the same time, that's something I want to try."

Karl Hammond and Paul Davidson are relegated to the bench, while Paul Sculthorpe will have a late fitness test.

Goulding's partner in the 1995 World Cup, Tony Smith, returns to Wigan's team after a four-match absence with a knee injury, a further boost for the league leaders at Castleford. Simon Haughton could return via the substitutes' bench.

It could also be a memorable weekend for Paul Deacon, named as one of the scrum-halves in the Emerging England squad to play Wales next month, but still to make his first-team debut for Bradford. Deacon, a 19-year-old signed from Oldham, should do just that against Huddersfield tomorrow, following the Bulls' decision to offload Edwards.

Bradford should also have Brian McDermott and Matt Callard back from injury and James Lowes from suspension as they try to end a three-match losing sequence.

Second-placed Leeds visit Warrington with Adrian Morley and Marc Glanville still missing. Daryl Powell continues at loose forward. With Lee Briers still out, John Duffy remains at scrum-half for Warrington.

Reuters

Backing for women

WOMEN'S TENNIS is pure theatre and deserves equal billing with the men's game, the new leader of the female side of the sport said yesterday.

Bart McGuire, a soft-spoken lawyer who now heads the Women's Tennis Association, pointed out that the women's game was rich in personalities who adorn pop and fashion magazines, regularly outgun the men in television ratings and have made tennis a fashionable sport.

"The women on the tour are great players and great theatre," he said.

Tennis is showbusiness, he said, insisting that the sport was not being trivialised. "This is a sport, it is not microbiology. It is supposed to be fun," he said.

McGuire was referring to players like Anna Kournikova, who is as famous for her looks as she is for her play, Venus and Serena Williams, the sisters dubbed "Ghetto Cinderellas" by

their father, Monica Seles, who has fought back from the trauma of being stabbed, and Steffi Graf, who is battling back after being plagued by injuries and family problems.

Last year, 3.5 million people went to watch women play tennis, the highest figure ever. In television ratings, surveys apparently show that women beat the men by about 20 per cent every time.

"Indeed I have said – somewhat tongue in cheek – I could make a strong case that women could get higher prize money than the men," McGuire said.

He argues that more women worldwide are attracted to tennis and that racket technology has revolutionised the game.

Tennis, he believes, has learned the painful lessons of burn-out. The girls are brought on to the tour later and last longer. "They are phased in gradually – there is less risk of injury," he said.

YESTERDAY'S WIMBLEDON RESULTS

MEN'S SINGLES
Holder: P Sampras (Us)
Second round
G Ivanisevic (Croat) bt C McNamee (Irl) 6-3 7-6 6-3
D Marelly (Col) bt M K Goeller (Ger) 6-3 7-5 6-3
Third round
P Rafter (Aus) bt M Gusarski (Swe) 6-3 6-7 6-2 6-1

WOMEN'S SINGLES
Holder: M Hingis (Swt)
Third round
N Zvereva (Bel) bt S Graf (Ger) 6-4 7-5

L A Davenport (Us) bt M A Venus (Ven) 6-3 1-6 6-2
M Orman (Neth) bt M de Swart (SA) 6-4 7-5
S Testud (F) bt L M McNeil (Us) 6-3 7-4
M Seles (Swt) bt N Sawamura (Japan) 6-3 5-7 6-0

MEN'S DOUBLES
Holder: T Woodbridge and M Woodforde (Aus)
First round
J Holmes and A Painter (Aus) bt P Luxa and D Stock (Cz Rep) 7-5 6-3
Seeds in capitals



Sandrine Testud plays a forehand in her third-round match against Lori McNeil yesterday, which the Frenchwoman won 6-3, 7-6

Reuters

Dazzling Doohan shows that he is still poles apart

MOTORCYCLING

MICHAEL DOOHAN, the four-times world champion, secured pole position for today's Dutch 500cc Grand Prix with a controlled effort in the closing seconds of final practice yesterday.

The Australian has won this event each of the last four years and will start with the fastest ever pole time registered on the circuit. Doohan

recorded 2min 02.092sec with just five seconds remaining to establish the 55th pole position of his career.

However, Doohan, riding a Honda, faced tough opposition from New Zealand's Simon Crafar, who was seeking his first pole. After 45 minutes of practice, both riders had clocked 2min 02.850sec. But with five minutes left, Crafar, riding a Yamaha, took the lead with

2min 02.491sec. Doohan's chances of regaining the lead looked bleak when the session was stopped with just over two minutes to go due to a fire in the pit lane.

After a few tense minutes,

practice resumed with only

time for two more laps

– one from a standing start.

Doohan roared away to record the fastest time ever, eclipsing the 2min 02.262sec set by his

team-mate, Alex Criville, in 1996.

"It was good to get a clean lap at the end there. I knew I could improve on my time if I was by myself," Doohan said.

"It's good to have that starting position, but the important thing is also to have been constantly fast out there."

The championship leader

Criville, who crashed badly on

this track last year, was ninth

fastest in 2min 03.469sec and will start from third line on the grid.

Japan's Norick Abe, riding a Yamaha, was third in 2min 02.601sec, having cleverly taken advantage of Doohan's slipstream in the final lap.

Criville leads the championship with 103 points, ahead of the Italian Max Biaggi with 98. Doohan is fourth on 90 points.

BASEBALL

Panama, the United States, Nicaragua, Canada and the Dominican Republic will compete in this summer's World Cup after eliminating five other teams in a qualifying tournament that ended on Thursday. The US team squared out its semi-final win of the nine-game tournament, beating reigning Mexican team 3-2 in 10 innings.

NATIONAL LEAGUE: Houston 5 Colorado 6 (12 innings).

INTERLEAGUE GAMES: Milwaukee 9 Minnesota 2; Chicago 5; Atlanta 7; Arizona 5; Cleveland 6; Cincinnati 7; Chicago 10; Oakland 2; San Francisco 2; San Diego 6; Texas 5; Tampa 2; Boston 7; Philadelphia 5; New York Yankees 6; Atlanta 0; New York Mets 3; Baltimore 2; Texas 9; Arizona 4; Anaheim 3; Los Angeles 2.

Julio Cesar Vazquez, in the third round in Connecticut on Thursday to keep his scheduled Sunday return with Oscar De La Hoya, the World Boxing Council super-middleweight champion, suffered a first-round defeat to Lou Savarese in a 12-round non-title bout, also in Connecticut. With the defeat went the 38-year-old's hopes of a rematch with Mike Tyson.

Bruce Sellen, the former World Boxing Association heavyweight champion, was sent yesterday to five years' probation plus 364 days in jail for smoking marijuanna with a 15-year-old girl and taking part in sexual activity with her last year.

Julio Cesar Vazquez, in the third

round in Connecticut on Thurs-

day to keep his scheduled Sun-

day return with Oscar De La

Hoya, the World Boxing Council

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PUNTERS' GUIDE

NEWMARKET

3.10: Multicoloured is saddled by Michael Stoute, a master at breeding the talents of older horses. This five-year-old was second to the sensible Sunstar at Sandown 14 months ago, but pulled head off his reaperance at Doncaster (100) three weeks ago. If John Reid can persuade him to settle, he would enter the reckoning over this longer trip. REDBRIDGE was the winner of that Doncaster event and followed up over today's distance a week later at Leicester. This one's odds are unlikely to be attractive, but he seems the best option.

3.45: The Godolphin-Dettori combination, so successful at Royal Ascot, seems sure to be popular here with Nabil. This colt did not lose face at Leicester on his seasonal debut when second to Diktat, who then won Ascot's Jersey Stakes with authority. HIDDEN MEADOW

HYPERION'S
TV TIPS

was all of five lengths behind Intikhab at Epsom (1m1½yds), but that run has since been shown to be highly creditable, because Intikhab went to Ascot and humbled a strong field for the Queen Anne Stakes (nearest rival eight lengths back).

4.15: There are difficulties in assessing the form of these juveniles, but WINNARE GRAND should be hard to beat.

4.45: Prima Verda took this prize on her debut a year ago and the mare could well repeat that victory if sharp enough this time. SWEET PEA won only a modest event at Bath last time but looks an improving filly.

THE CURRAGH – Sunday

3.55 BUDWEISER IRISH DERBY (GROUP 1) BBC2/C4
250,000 1m 4f Weight 52kg Value £246,300
1 5-21 CAMPO CATINO (IR) M O'Brien 9.0 ... C O'Brien 9.0
2 4-22 CITY HONOURS (22) (Gochan) S Ben Sun 9.0 ... K J Manning 9.0
3 19371 DESERT FOX (22) (Maj Nigella) A P O'Brien 8.0 ... K J Manning 8.0
4 2271 DRAKE'S FAMILY (22) (Maj Nigella) Family P Baby (Fr) 3 3.5 ... K J Manning 8.0
5 20002 FANTASY (22) (Maj Nigella) Maj Nigella 3.5 ... K J Manning 8.0
6 1-23 FROK MATERIAL (22) (C-Bet) (Conquest Synch) A P O'Brien 3.5 ... J A Hartnett 8.0
7 1-10 SANADIN (22) (Princely Pal) H Cosey (Fr) 3.5 ... K Fahey 2.0
8 8-22 SARATOGA SPRINGS (22) (C) (Maj) A P O'Brien 9.0 ... W H Stibbs 7.0
9 1-10 SUNSHINE STREET (22) (F) (Garvey) H Muzic 9.0 ... R Hughes 10.0
10 10-32 TAKAHARU (22) (Maj) A P O'Brien 9.0 ... R Hughes 10.0
BETTING: 4-1 City Honours, 3-1 Drakes, 6-1 Desert, Saratoga Springs, 10-1 Campo Catino, 10-2 Gochan, 10-3 Drakes, 10-4 Maj Nigella, 10-5 Sunshine Street, 10-6 Takaharu, 10-7 Frok Material, 10-8 Saratoga Springs, 10-9 Maj Nigella, 10-10 Drakes, 10-11 Drakes, 10-12 Drakes, 10-13 Drakes, 10-14 Drakes, 10-15 Drakes, 10-16 Drakes, 10-17 Drakes, 10-18 Drakes, 10-19 Drakes, 10-20 Drakes, 10-21 Drakes, 10-22 Drakes, 10-23 Drakes, 10-24 Drakes, 10-25 Drakes, 10-26 Drakes, 10-27 Drakes, 10-28 Drakes, 10-29 Drakes, 10-30 Drakes, 10-31 Drakes, 10-32 Drakes, 10-33 Drakes, 10-34 Drakes, 10-35 Drakes, 10-36 Drakes, 10-37 Drakes, 10-38 Drakes, 10-39 Drakes, 10-40 Drakes, 10-41 Drakes, 10-42 Drakes, 10-43 Drakes, 10-44 Drakes, 10-45 Drakes, 10-46 Drakes, 10-47 Drakes, 10-48 Drakes, 10-49 Drakes, 10-50 Drakes, 10-51 Drakes, 10-52 Drakes, 10-53 Drakes, 10-54 Drakes, 10-55 Drakes, 10-56 Drakes, 10-57 Drakes, 10-58 Drakes, 10-59 Drakes, 10-60 Drakes, 10-61 Drakes, 10-62 Drakes, 10-63 Drakes, 10-64 Drakes, 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Ecclestone sides with Schumacher

MOTOR RACING

BY DERICK ALLSOP
at Magny-Cours

THE DRIVING force behind Formula One, Bernie Ecclestone, entered the sport's ragging debate here yesterday with a ringing endorsement of Michael Schumacher's aggressive style and a withering put down for "whingeing losers".

Schumacher, who is seeking a fourth win in five years at the French Grand Prix tomorrow to maintain his championship challenge, has been criticised by his fellow drivers following his antics in Canada earlier this month.

The German won the Canadian Grand Prix, despite incurring a stop-and-go penalty for allegedly running Heinz-Harald Frentzen off the track. Frentzen, supported by his Williams team-mate Jacques Villeneuve, has called on Schumacher to step down as an official of the Grand Prix Drivers' Association.

Ecclestone, never a man to discourage controversy, responded: "I get fed up with hearing all the complaints about Michael Schumacher's driving. I don't know why they keep harping on about it. He's a racer and it's a pity we have not got more like him."

"He's good for the sport and like other guys in the past such as Ayrton Senna and Nigel Mansell, he's prepared to take a few risks. We don't want drivers pussyfooting, we want them racing and competing."

"But Michael is a big boy. I am sure he will be able to cope with his critics on and off the track. Whingers are losers."

Schumacher shouldn't have been penalised in Canada. I saw nothing wrong and there was no accident. The stewards should never have done what they did. He didn't have the chance to give his side of things."

It is widely perceived within Formula One that Ecclestone is keen to see Schumacher stay at Ferrari, rather than move to McLaren.

Coullard, anxious to stay in touch with the title chase after being let down by his car in Montreal, was third yesterday, a tenth of a second behind Hakkinen.

"I am cautiously optimistic. I hope I can make it tough for McLaren," Irvine said. "I put my money on Michael at the start of the year and see no reason why I should change my mind."

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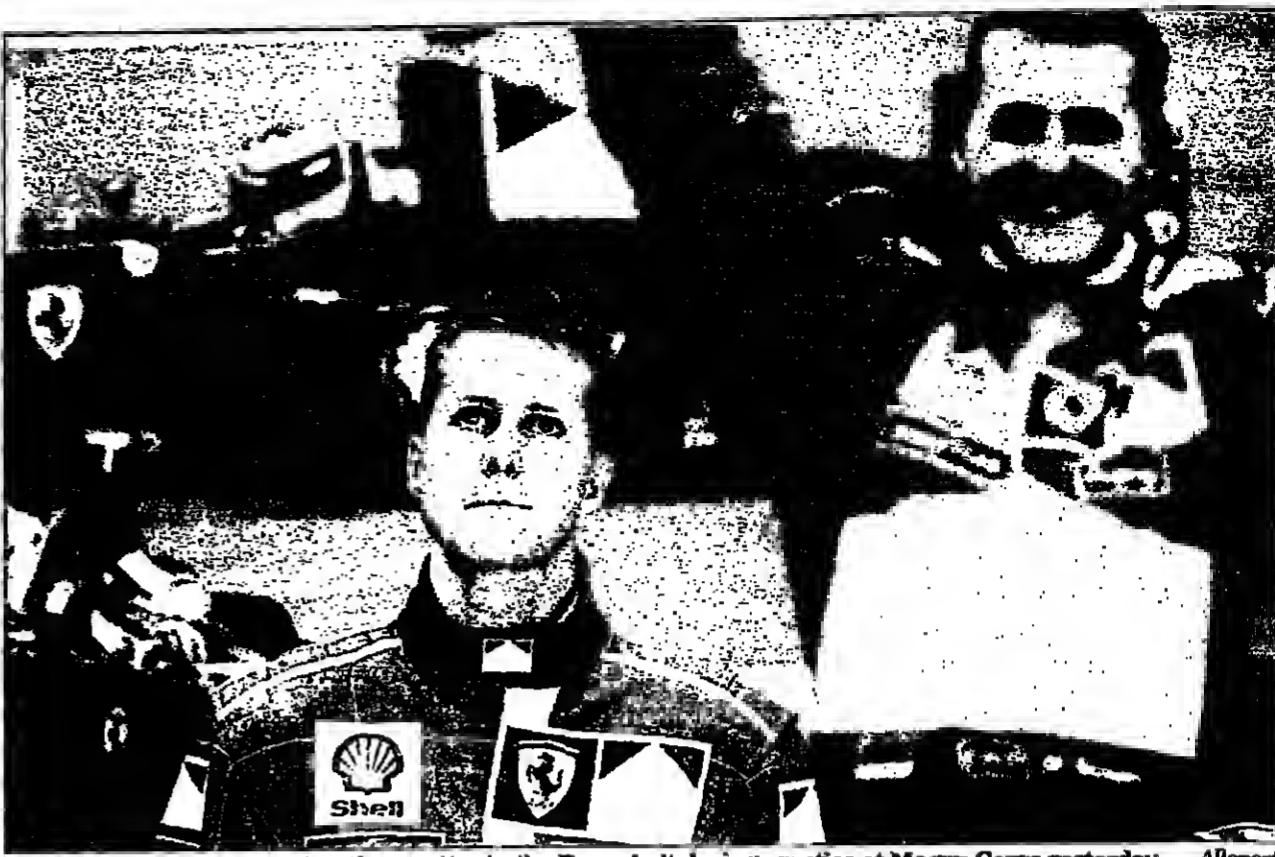
Irvine, Frentzen was fourth ahead of Schumacher.

Damon Hill, continuing his search for a first point in the Jordan, was encouraged by ninth place. "We have definitely used our testing to good effect," he said. "We have a much better chance of qualifying further up in the top 10 than normal."

Johnny Herbert's Sauber was a disappointing 10th following an encouraging performance in testing here last week.

FRENCH GRAND PRIX (Magny-Cours):

1 M Hakkinen (Fin) McLaren-Mercedes 1 min 16.513sec fav speed 124.275mph 199.850km/h; 2 E Irvine (GB) 1:16.552; 3 C Coulard (Can) McLaren-Mercedes 1:16.707; 4 H-H Frentzen (GER) Williams-Mecachrome 1:17.026; 5 M Schumacher (GER) Ferrari 1:17.429; 6 R Schumacher (GER) Jordan-BMW 1:17.452; 7 J Villeneuve (Can) Benetton-Mecachrome 1:17.466; 8 A Wurz (Aust) Benetton-Mecachrome 1:17.702; 9 D Coulard (Can) Williams-Mecachrome 1:17.977; 10 J Trulli (It) Prost-Peugeot 1:18.035; 11 J Alimi (Fr) Sauber-Petronas 1:18.177; 12 D Panis (Fr) Ligier-Ford 1:18.346; 13 M Salo (Fin) Arrows-Yamaha 1:18.656; 14 R Barrichello (Brasil) Stewart-Peugeot 1:18.707; 15 Y Irvine (GB) Minardi-Ford 1:20.265; 21 S Nakane (Japan) Minardi-Ford 1:20.871.



Michael Schumacher watches the monitor in the Ferrari pit during practice at Magny-Cours yesterday Allsport

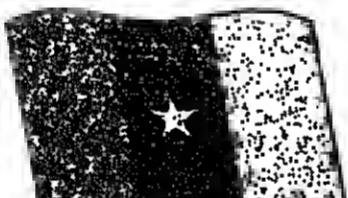
BT's line up for the World Cup.



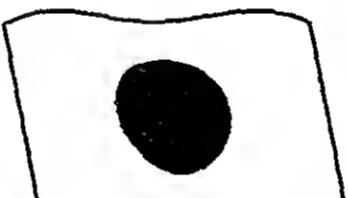
USA from 12p



France from 13p



Cameroon from 56p



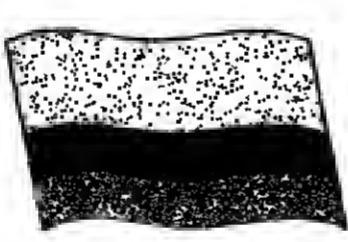
Japan from 31p



Italy from 15p



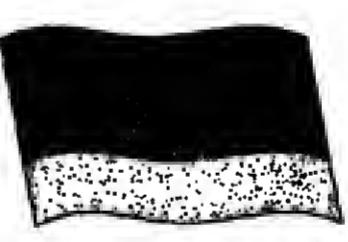
Austria from 19p



Colombia from 68p



Brazil from 56p



Germany from 13p



South Africa from 38p



Tunisia from 31p

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Seeing is not believing in an instant replay age



MIKE ROWBOTTOM

I HAVE never attended a match at a World Cup finals. This is not a complaint, or even a plaintive request, simply a fact. Like most people, I have always experienced the World Cup through the medium of television. And I know for another fact that if I were to be present at one of the matches in France 98 now, I would probably struggle to believe in it.

In our televisually dominated society it can come as something as a shock to see a sporting event simply taking place in front of one's eyes - to experience sports as they did in the old days. Observing a ball rolling about in a net, or a digital track-side clock frozen on an improbably low figure, our instinct is to suspend disbelief until the pictures, and commentary, confirm it all.

Seeing, nowadays, is not quite believing. Of course, as a sports journalist, I am in a privileged position when it comes to gaining access to the action. But at any major happening, such as the Olympic Games, the watching press have television monitors to watch replays of any incident of note. It makes life much easier. Indeed, for events such as the 100 metres, where eight men or women flash across the line together, it makes life possible.

Big screens now offer the same facility to the spectator. It is not just the Olympics - football clubs are doing it, too. Arsenal ram a high-volume action replay down your throat at half-time, while Tottenham have developed a routine of playing back incidents during lulls in play.

The nature of spectating is being transformed - in fact, it is being homogenised. And while we all gain in terms of information, something is lost in the process.

For one thing, the phenomenon of, shall we say, imaginative recollection is becoming a thing of the past. That free-kick which curved into the net like a boomerang - it took a deflection off a defender. The scorer who was a mile offside when the ball was played - well he wasn't. The pictures prove it.

Whole tranches of pub conversation have been killed stone dead, although there seem to be enough other issues to fill the gap.

As far as the fourth estate is concerned the leeway that was afforded to reporters before the television age - a leeway that was often scandalously abused - has now ceased to exist.

Paradoxically, most of the readers who peruse a report the following day are likely to be more fully apprised of whether the ball crossed the line or the tackle was intentional than was the writer as he sat in his press box, working towards a deadline. They have seen it on the television.

Often, too, the reader is in a position to be better informed in terms of post-match or post-race quotes. On several occasions, particularly at large events such as the Olympics when edition deadlines are pressing, I have found myself phoning the office to check what Linford said to Brendan immediately after the race knowing that it will be half an hour before the sprinter clears the mass of other television and radio interviews and is nabbed for the benefit of the written press. Such is life for the reporter in the technological age.

So why be there? Who said that? There's no call for that, thank you. Well go on. Justify it. Answer One: To quote an incorrigible former Fleet Street sports editor: "Where we score is the quality of our reportage."

No! All right then. Answer Two: Like a tennis player, you have to go for the angles. Background research, or a novel viewpoint, can contribute to a report which includes something not available from the televised coverage.

On occasions that viewpoint can sometimes be geographically different to that of the cameras. Three years ago at the European Cup in Lille I was chatting to some British athletes in a dug-out along the side of the triple jump pits when Jonathan Edwards flew over like some kind of supersonic plane en route for the longest distance ever covered in the event. It was awe inspiring.

During that competition, along with a radio reporter, I also witnessed Linford Christie whooping and bounding about inside a locked room after a particularly satisfying victory in the 200 metres, for all the world like a diver decompressing after a deep-sea mission. The rules of the game have changed for sporting scribes. What happened is now given; why, how, and what happened next are the questions which have to be answered.

The overall approach works towards a rationale footy and often expressed by one of my esteemed colleagues in the press box: "We're not here to watch it; we're here to report it."

Nodding off to a surfeit of the short-ball game

IT USED to be the case that only poor players fell over on the football field, the good players were those who managed to stay on their feet. In this World Cup we have seen people toppling over when an opponent so much as breathes on them and I'm getting fed up with it. If we are not careful that kind of blatant cheating will drive a lot of people away from the game.

Defenders are not allowed to tackle anymore, so forwards are plumping to the ground to win a free-kick. With the diving and the non-tackling we are not seeing players turning on the ball, yet that has always been one of the basic footballing arts. Think of the great players - Maradona, our Robert, Eusebio, Pele - they were all gifted at turning on the ball and fooling their markers.

Italy face test of ebb and Flo

ITALY ENTER the World Cup second round tonight against a side that conjure plenty of bad memories for the coach, Cesare Maldini, and his players.

Maldini has good reason to be wary of Norway, and not just because they defeated the world champions Brazil 2-1 on Tuesday to book their place in the last 16 and extend their unbeaten run to 19 matches.

Maldini was coach of the Under-21 side which was humiliated 6-0 by the Scandinavians in an extraordinary match in Stavanger in 1991, a defeat which almost cost the Italy coach his job. But there is little chance that the Azzurri will be caught unawares this time in the Stade Velodrome in Marseilles.

"Norway are a very good team indeed. They were one of the teams we predicted would get through the group stage," Maldini said. "That's why I sent one of my assistants to see their game against Brazil."

Maldini was not the only one to have suffered in Stavanger, as the midfielders Demetrio Albertini and Dino Baggio were two of the team on the wrong end of that 6-0 defeat.

Goalkeeper Gianluca Pagliuca and Inter's veteran defender Giuseppe Bergomi have also good



JACK
CHARLTON

There have been a lot of goals and that is because people are afraid to tackle. Michel Platini, who organised the tournament, and Sepp Blatter, the Fifa president, seem determined to turn football into a non-

contact sport and if that's the case you can count me out of it. I just don't want to know.

When you do see a tackle in this World Cup it appears outrageous because we are not used to them. Look at the African players when they try to make a tackle - I wish the Brazilian coaches who have gone into that part of the world, would teach them how to make a proper challenge. Then look at Norway, Denmark and Sweden, countries which have benefited from the introduction of British coaching techniques. Their players know how to execute a challenge correctly.

When I watch a game I like to see something different, but the problem with this World Cup is that everybody is playing the same way. They are all playing from the back and sometimes the ball will go through three

or four players without making any headway. This type of football bores me from time to time and I'm afraid I have been nodding off to sleep in front of the television.

No way have a lot to answer for because they are not playing the game. They are trying to be more progressive and get the ball forward early. When I was growing up in the North-East I was always told that when you received the ball you first looked up to see what was ahead of you and then played the ball forward whether it was five yards, 15, 25 or 30.

It is a fallacy that all the great sides only play short balls. Brazil, for instance, play a large number of balls long and into space - they only play it square or back when they are being pressed.

I like the look of Brazil, but I am not departing from France as my

original tip to finish up the winners. Somebody described them on the television the other day as "awesome" and I wouldn't disagree with that. They have so much pace and depth of talent. They have been preparing for this World Cup for the last two or three years and it shows.

It was interesting to see them beat Denmark even without Zinedine Zidane. He is a crucial part of the French set-up. There is nobody stronger, more aggressive, more powerful in this tournament, but the stupidity of his foul, which saw him dismissed against Saudi Arabia, left me shaking my head in disbelief.

Zidane and the Brazilian captain Dunga are the two players to impress me so far. There's nothing exceptional about Dunga, he's an ordinary type of player whose passing is sound, but he is always available to receive the ball or to break up an opposing attack; he is my sort of player. I also like the Croatian striker Davor Suker and the Italian Christian Vieri who looks like a centre-half trying to play centre-forward; he is so awkward. But when the ball is delivered across there he is to head it down or strike it first-time.

The important stages of the competition are now beginning and this is when things start to close up and the games get tight. I'm upset that Scotland are not there, because they are a nation who love their football, but I agree with the verdict that they were just not good enough.

But for a couple of moments of hesitation against Nigeria in their opening fixture, Spain would have qualified and the fact that they didn't is good news for the 16 who have gone through. Nobody would have wanted to face them.



Norway's Tore Andre Flo shows the power in training that the Italians will be wary of today

PA



DIARY

POR EVERYBODY not in France - and for many of those who are - the television set has become man's best friend. In the Australian outback, die-hard fans drove hundreds of miles for a television set when the World Cup coverage didn't reach them. "The guys on the Mir space station can watch it and we can't," grumbled a mate supporter. In Hanoi one shop owner, Nguyen Viet Hung, claims to have doubled his TV set sales to 50 a day while in the Peruvian capital Lima, television sets have even appeared in classrooms - with Sir's blessing. Fearing a dramatic drop in attendance, staff allowed pupils to watch the action but, teachers being teachers, there was a price to pay and after the show from France came history and geography lessons featuring the competing nations.

FIFA ARE investigating whether the South African defender Pierre Issa was wearing a wire during his side's final game against Saudi Arabia. The latest sign of technology impinging on the people's game was exposed when a photo showed

a device clipped over his right ear. The referee did not notice it and there is nothing in the rules to stop players being in direct contact with the bench. Not that it did him any good - he gave away two penalties.

BUSINESSMEN in Bordeaux were so impressed by the behaviour of Scottish and Norwegian fans at last week's game that they paid for ad-

vertisements to express their thanks. "Thanks and see you soon... we're missing you already" was the message from the city's chamber of commerce which appeared in both Scottish and Norwegian newspapers.

The Romanians are planning a radical new look from now on after their coach, Angel Jordanescu, agreed

QUOTES OF THE DAY

"I blame the coach for that and have no problem in saying that. As long as Steve Sampson and Clive Charles [his assistant] stay around, then I'm going to have nothing to do with it." USA's Bob Ramos lays the blame for failure squarely with the coaches.

"There are four teams that can win the Cup: Yugoslavia, France, Holland and Germany." So says the Yugoslav defender, Slobodan Komijenovic, who plays the Netherlands on Monday.

"We are capable of moving up a gear and we can beat any team here." Jürgen Klinsmann heralds the usual ominous move by the Germans.

"I want to thank Fifa for giving this wonderful opportunity for countries to play together." The Iranian coach, Jala Tulebi, knows how to curry favour with the authorities

to shave his head on condition his team topped their group after the first round. Another condition is that all his players die their hair in the national colours. Meanwhile the Chilean defender, Javier Margas, has dyed his hair red for today's game with Brazil. "If we win I'll dye it another colour," he said.

THE PARAGUAYAN striker Miguel Angel Benitez may have struck gold with his goal against Nigeria timed at 52 seconds - the fastest goal of the tournament so far, well ahead of Brazil's Cesar Sampayo's effort against Scotland. If no one betters it, Benitez will win a solid gold Swiss watch.

IN NORWAY, Ragnar Lutcherath didn't have tickets for France so he did the next best thing, he built himself a wooden grandstand in his back yard so he could eat hot dogs with his friends, wave Norwegian flags and cheer wildly at the TV - simulating the stadium experience.

Compiled by Trevor Haylett

THE GLOBAL GAME

THE WORLD CUP AROUND THE WORLD

afterthought, some even look at it as a joke." "New York Post" is scathing about America's pointless trip to France.

THE UNITED STATES could finish as the worst team in the World Cup, bottom-feeders fighting it out with Jamaica, Japan and Tunisia.

It's like that Sesame Street game - one of these things is not like the others (in terms of size, economic resources, pompous lawyers in charge of the national program), one of these things doesn't belong." "San Jose Mercury News" mourns the fall of a mighty superpower.

"THE FINGER-POINTING and the second-guessing and the bitterness, finally, were irrelevant. The Yanks were 150-1 shots here, and 150-1 shots watch the second round on TV in their rumpus rooms. They are going home because they were in awe of the Germans. They are going home because they are The Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight."

"Boston Globe" adds to the national gloom.

24 x 330ml bottles Rolling Rock. Was £26.16. Only £15.69.
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US trio will be fined by coach

AT LEAST three American players can expect substantial fines after public criticism of their coach, Steve Sampson, during the World Cup.

Alexei Lalas, Tab Ramos and Jeff Agoos have all said they will refuse to play under Sampson, having voiced strong disapproval of the US team's tactics and selection.

The Americans lost all three of their group games, ending with Thursday's 1-0 defeat by Yugoslavia. Sampson's future as coach will be decided within the next month by the United States Soccer Federation.

Sampson has promised the fines would be "significant" and that he would not pick any of the players concerned if he retains his job.

"I don't think any level of unprofessionalism is acceptable," said Sampson yesterday, particularly stunned by Ramos's comments that the Americans' campaign has been a "mess".

"It's unfortunate he feels so free to voice his opinions about me when I have given him so much respect and credit," the coach said.

Midfielder Predrag Radovcic, upset at not being in the starting line-up against the country of his birth, may also be disciplined and Sampson revealed he had considered sending the bearded Lalas home following an outburst after the first group game against Germany.

"His professionalism was top class but his mood once we lost changed dramatically," said Sampson, stressing he had always regarded Lalas as a back-up defender in France.

"In my opinion you earn the right to represent your country."

Sampson himself rejected the suggestion he might resign. "I've worked too hard... I'm not going to let one or two individuals dictate my career."

But he added that if he failed to be reappointed as coach he would be interested in the role of heading the US Federation's new "Project 2010", aimed at improving football standards in the States.

One option could be for Sampson to be moved sideways to front Project 2010, an attempt to develop a structure in the United States to give the national team a realistic chance of winning the World Cup in 12 years' time.

"If they consider it's a matter of poor execution by the players, I think they should retain me," he said. "They have every reason to dismiss me if they think it is a case of poor preparation or tactics."

The players earned \$35,000 apiece from the tournament, but the exact size of the fines has yet to be confirmed. "Those concerned will be notified by letter over the next few days," Sampson said.

Sampson should soon know whether the poor showing has cost him his job.

Alan Rothenberg, president of the US Soccer Federation, said a decision would be made "within 30 days" on whether to reappoint Sampson, who took over in April 1995.

Under Sampson, the United States beat Brazil in the Concacaf Gold Cup in February, but have otherwise struggled to score goals on a regular basis.



Goalkeeper Brad Friedel and team-mate Ernie Stewart can only ponder another defeat, this time at the hands of Yugoslavia PA

Mexicans celebrate success

MEXICAN religious passions and traditional machismo ran riot on Thursday after Mexico's surprise 2-2 draw against the Netherlands carried the team through to the second round of the World Cup.

José Guadalupe Hernandez, the parish priest at Our Lady of Lightening in central Puebla state, said he had prayed to Catholic Mexico's most revered religious figure for help after

Hernandez installed a television in his church near a statue of baby Jesus dressed for the occasion in the national team's green, white and red colours. The congregation's faith was rewarded by a last-minute equaliser by Luis Hernandez, which propelled Mexico beyond the first round of a World Cup tournament held in Europe for the first time.

Mexico's next match is on June 29 against Germany. President Ernesto Zedillo phoned the coach, Manuel Lapuente, minutes after the final whistle sounded in St Etienne to tell him, "the team had the statue to do greater things".

Thousands of fans poured into Mexico's streets and plazas to celebrate after a game that had virtually paralysed offices and filled bars since the early hours. Celebrations soured, however, in Mexico City's main street, Paseo de la Reforma Avenue, when crowds battled with riot police defending the Angel of Independence monument from a repeat of the damage inflicted during World Cup revelry in 1994 and 1986.

Three media photographers were treated for head wounds after they were caught under a hail of missiles thrown by rioters. They were later released from hospitals.

Belgium, facing a barrage of criticism over their below-par World Cup performance and early exit, will be radically overhauled according to their coach, George Leekens. "The team will have to be drastically rejuvenated," he said.

Belgium were knocked out in the first round of their fifth successive World Cup finals after recording three draws against the Netherlands, Mexico and South Korea. "We have to admit that our team is not of the highest quality," said Leekens whose side for the Mexico match had an average age of 32. Leekens will now kick off preparations for the 2000 European Championship, which Belgium will host jointly with the Netherlands. "Now we have to start rebuilding the team, a young team plus a few players with a lot of experience," he said.

The Belgium captain, Franky van der Elst, had already announced that, at the age of 37, he was quitting international football and the trio of goalkeepers, with an average of 35, are also due to retire.

Lorenzo Staelens and Vital Borkelmans, 35 and 34 respectively, are also likely to be dropped but it was not clear whether Enzo Scifo, a sprightly 32-year-old, had also played his last international game.

Iranians make exit feeling satisfied

IRAN GO home from their second World Cup with a sense of mission accomplished after a politically charged victory over the United States, and a sense of determination to come back stronger next time.

Thursday's 2-0 defeat by Germany was not without its moments for the lively Iranian attack spearheaded by Bayern Munich-bound Ali Daei, and the coach, Jalal Talebi, pronounced himself fully satisfied.

"I'm very happy with the Iranian team's performance. This is good for the future of football in Iran," he said after a game that saw the Germans take control only after a half-time dressing-down from their coach, Bernd Vogts.

"We'll gain a lot of experience from this," Talebi said, who took over just before the finals began when the Croatian Tomislav Ivic was fired during a miserable warm-up campaign.

"We've learned a lot," attacking midfielder Karim Bagheri, who plays in Germany for Arminia Bielefeld, said. "I'm sure we'll come back with a stronger team that will compete on a world level. We have to profit from this experience and keep working. Believe me, we will put this to good use."

Iran, long a leading force in Asian football, first reached the World Cup finals in Argentina in 1978. They earned just a point but impressed many with their skills. A year later the Islamic Revolution and subsequent long war with neighbouring Iraq were to stunt the growth of Iranian football.

Iran only qualified for France 98 on the away goals rule after an extraordinary two-goal comeback in a play-off in Australia. They go out in Group F having beaten the Americans but also having lost to Germany and to Yugoslavia, 1-0.

The cautious opening up of the Islamic republic, notably with the number of players being hired by European clubs, may continue to bring dividends: "Playing in Europe has been very good for our players in making progress and if more come here I think it will help Iranian football," Daei said.

The wild rejoicing that greeted last Sunday's 2-1 win over Tehran's arch political foe, the USA, leaves little doubt what will be the abiding memory of the tournament for the Iranian public. That victory set off wild celebrations in the country, where the United States has been "The Great Satan" since the Islamic Revolution toppled the US-backed Shah in 1979.

"It was a game like any other," the defender Mohammad Khakpour said. "We always go for three points in every game. But what was important for us is that we were here. The main goal was to play well."

The appearance of the national side at the World Cup in France is expected to help revive Iranian football and help it regain the popularity it enjoyed with Iran's first World Cup appearance in Argentina.

Thirsty search for a speakeasy

ANDY MARTIN

AT LARGE
IN FRANCE



IT WASN'T even opening time and it was already closing time. I sprinted over to the Caron bar opposite Lens station, but I missed last orders by a whisker. It was 8.01am.

Ian and Stuart, from Midlothian, were taking no chances and staying put at Hazebrouck, 30-odd kilometres away, until just before the match, by which time they would, they predicted, be "totally plastered". Despite having already drunk themselves to the point of stupor by 10pm, they had very decently offered me a spot on the floor of their room in the Hotel du Nord, having first checked that (a) I didn't snore, (b) I wasn't gay.

Just to be on the safe side, Ian also invited the attractive Hélène behind the bar to share his bed, by way of equipping himself with a bodyguard. "You and me, we're made for each other," he ventured. Her husband seemed to take this in good heart.

Meanwhile, Stuart had already crawled off to crash, but Ian insisted it was not too late to fit in one more glass. It felt like being in the Blitz, the night before a good bombing, in a frenzied eat-drink-and-be-merry mood - with the emphasis squarely on drink for tomorrow we're dry. But, looking back on it, that was nothing. Today, when for 24 hours Lens had become the land of prohibition, it was really crazy.

Today I, along with just about everyone else in town, provoked by a combination of "Heineken" and "1664"

gusters and small signs saying "No beer today", am obsessed with a quest which might be described as "A la recherche du Stelo Artico perdu". Prohibition is a red rag. The search for the speakeasy was on.

In the Caron bar, the reaction was mixed. One man with the kind of moustache which is normally covered with froth was relaxed: "Tomorrow I will have two." Further down the zinc, a man in blue overalls with a yellow Gitane stuck to his lip was less phlegmatic: "But Marie, I am a regular, surely you can..." But Marie was brutal and unequivocal. She explained that she had had an *anglois* in her bar only the night before who had shattered a glass on the counter prior to shoving it in the face of his neighbour.

"This is insupportable!" she concluded. She was all the more keen on abiding by the law as there was a customs man passing through at the time (sporting a "Douanes" armband) precisely to check that the taps were not still dripping.

But somewhere business was going on as usual. Guys were parading up and down the main street with cans in their hands. I asked one of them where it all came from. "There's a little off-licence, behind the Audi showroom," he said. By the time I got there, behind a squad of gendarmes, it had reverted to Coca-Cola.

Next I, along with just about everyone else in town, provoked by a combination of "Heineken" and "1664"

IN FRANCE WITHOUT A TICKET

Nicholas Harling's daily quest to see a World Cup match Day 17

My reluctance to fork out up to 5000 francs for the highly dubious privilege of standing on seas - among the English rabbit in Lens led me to an alternative pasture in Lyon. The desperation of some fans in Lens had persuaded some of them to leave messages in the town's telephone kiosks requesting tickets. No such contingency plans were needed in Lyon for an academic fixture given extra appeal by the endearing qualities of Japan and their shinking ever-so-well-behaved supporters. Japan's pursuit of a first World Cup goal provided me with a good enough reason to attend, likewise thousands of other ticketless hopefuls. At the station I exchanged a spare 500 franc Netherlands v Yugoslavia ticket I already bought for Toulouse on Tuesday with a 350 franc ticket offered by a Japanese who paid me the difference. Tickets were going for well under cost prices at the ground.

Total games: 17. Total cost price: 6,220 fr. Total price paid: 6,405 fr. Two tickets to get in.

Andy Martin's Nastro Azzurro / Italy & Naples Vrs. Uva

*One thing is for sure.
Italy will have a ball!*

*Nastro Azzurro / Italy & Naples
you feel would like to wish both teams
good fortune and a stylish game.*

*But, being Italy & Naples you feel,
you can imagine who we hope will be
partying at the final whistle. After
all, you have to look after Nastro Uva.*

Fiorini's Nastro Azzurro / Italy & Naples Vrs. Uva

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO FRANCE 98

YESTERDAY'S MATCHES

Argentina 1 Croatia 0

GROUP H: PARC LESCURE, BORDEAUX. ATTENDANCE: 35,000

Goals: Pineda 36

Yellow cards: 3 (Ortega, Ayala, Vivas)

Red cards: 0

Corners: 3

Offside: 4

Free-kicks (against): 14

Coach: Daniel Passarella

Goals: 0

Yellow cards: 4 (Bilic, Soldo, Boban, Jarni).

Red cards: 0

Corners: 3

Offside: 0

Free-kicks (against): 22

Coach: Miroslav Blazevic

Japan 1 Jamaica 2

GROUP H: STADE GERLAND, LYONS. ATTENDANCE: 48,500

Goal: 1 (Nakayama 75)

Yellow card: 1 (Yamaguchi)

Red cards: 0

Corners: 8

Offside: 3

Free-kicks (against): 15

Coach: Takeshi Okada

Goal: Whitmore 39, 54

Yellow cards: 2 (Malcolm, Dawes)

Red cards: 0

Corners: 5

Offside: 8

Free-kicks (against): 23

Coach: Rene Simoes

THURSDAY'S LATE MATCHES

USA 0 Yugoslavia 1

GROUP F: STADE DE LA BEAUJOIRE, NANTES. ATTENDANCE: 39,000

Goals: 0

Yellow cards: 1 (Reyna)

Red cards: 0

Corners: 3

Offside: 2

Free-kicks (against): 13

Coach: Steve Sampson

Goals: Komljenovic 4

Yellow cards: 2 (Stankovic, Ognjenovic)

Red cards: 0

Corners: 5

Offside: 0

Free-kicks (against): 20

Coach: Slobodan Santrac

Running commentary

1 min: Hejduk's deep cross brushes Yugoslavia crossbar.

4 min: Friedel parries free kick by Mihajlovic but Komljenovic neatly heads home rebound.

14 min: Kralj saves McBride's header.

16 min: Friedel pushes Stankovic cross behind; almost caught by inswinging corner.

24 min: Stewart has shot charged down.

30 min: Milosevic cuts inside from right but Friedel is equal to his shot.

32 min: Moore shoots wide after snatching at chance made by McBride cross.

37 min: McBride suffers cut head in clash with Jokanovic.

41 min: Yellow card for Stankovic, joining Reyna in book.

57 min: Jugovic shoots wide.

61 min: Ognjenovic booked for diving.

63 min: Friedel does well to gather awkward free kick by Mihajlovic.

71 min: Milosevic just wide after cleverly wriggling into space in Yugoslav box.

75 min: Friedel saves at feet of Ognjenovic.

79 min: McBride's shot on turn saved.

84 min: USA substitute Radosavljevic curls free-kick over bar.

89 min: Savicic finds Ognjenovic but youngster fails to make most of chance.

Germany 2 Iran 0

GROUP F: STADE DE LA MOSSON, MONTPELLIER. ATTENDANCE: 35,000

Goals: Bierhoff 50, Klinsmann 58

Yellow cards: 2 (Klinsmann, Hässler)

Red cards: 0

Corners: 3

Offside: 2

Free-kicks (against): 13

Coach: Berti Vogts

Goals: 0

Yellow cards: 1 (Daei)

Red cards: 0

Corners: 2

Offside: 3

Free-kicks (against): 17

Coach: Jalal Talebi

Running commentary

2 min: Mahdavikia defends coolly at start.

5 min: Iran still stuck in their own half.

6 min: Daei offers first shot for Iran.

14 min: Köpke comes out to block Mahdavikia.

19 min: Iran defend well when Klinsmann makes first serious attempt on goal.

20 min: Heinrich makes feeble attempt to get to good chance.

27 min: Abedzadeh comes out bravely to clear dangerous attack.

31 min: Yellow card for Klinsmann (dissent).

43 min: Tarnat strikes long shot well as Germany's authority diminishes.

46 min: Yellow card Hässler (rugged tackle on Estili).

47 min: Yellow card Daei (foul on Wörm).

51 min: Bierhoff heads in from Hässler's accurate cross.

58 min: Klinsmann heads in spectacularly after Bierhoff hits post.

73 min: Iran raise first attack for ages but Azizi's back heel comes to nothing.

85 min: Bierhoff heads down powerfully.

89 min: Mahdavikia has one last chance blocked.

90 min: Kirsten 'goal' disallowed for offside.

GOALSCORERS

FOUR GOALS

GROUP B: Christiano Mer (It).

GROUP E: Gabriel Batistuta (Arg.)

THREE GOALS

GROUP F: Marcelo Salas (Chile).

GROUP G: Thierry Henry (Fr).

GROUP H: Luis Hernández (Mex).

TWO GOALS

GROUP A: Abelardo (Bra); Abdelatif

Haddad (Mor); Alfonso (Col); Amancio (Per);

Antônio (Bra); André (Per);

Antônio (Per); André (Per);

</div

SPORT

MORGAN AIMS TO END LONG WAIT P21 • GRAF'S WIMBLEDON DREAM DIES P22

Argentina feeling 100 per cent

By Phil Davison
at Parc Lescure, Bordeaux

Argentina
Pineda 36
Croatia
Att: 35,000

ARGENTINA BEAT Croatia here yesterday to win Group H to go through to the last 16 with a 100 per cent record. Croatia finished second in the group.

Twenty years and one day after their then captain, Daniel Passarella, hoisted the World Cup in Buenos Aires, yesterday's victory set up the potential for a game against England in the second round reminiscent of the renowned 1986 match in Mexico in which Diego Maradona beat England with one flash of brilliance and one of cunning. Although he had help from "The Hand of God" for one goal, there was no denying the brilliance of the run that led to the other.

Fans who had hoped to see Argentina's Gabriel Batistuta add to his top scorer tally of four goals, or to see Croatia's Davor Suker add to his two, were disappointed. But the two nations, in both of which football was started in the 1860s by Englishmen – an industrialist in Croatia and English sailors in Argentina – showed football had come a long way since then.

Passarella – now national team coach and nicknamed "El Kaiser" in Argentina – surprised Croatia with four changes in their starting line-up that showed the depth of their midfield strength.

Hector Pineda, starting in the midfield role usually played by the regular captain, Diego Simeone, scored the winner in the 36th minute, moving on to a lobbed pass from Ariel Ortega, bringing it down on his chest and crashing a left-foot volley inside goalkeeper Dragan Ladic's right-hand post.

The move had been started by another newcomer, Marcelo Gallardo, who started in place of Claudio Lopez. Passarella further confounded the Croatians by bringing on Simeone and Lopez for the second half.

The Croatian coach, Miroslav Blazevic, left no doubt that he was not content with second-place in the group – he had always said he would prefer to play England than Romania in the next round – by bringing on striker Goran Vlaovic of Valencia at half-time to replace mid-fielder Silvio Marić.

But the gamble by Passarella, making four changes from the team that crushed Jamaica 5-0 in Paris, paid off. Pineda always looked dangerous coming down the left flank



Argentina's Marcelo Gallardo cannot find a way through the Croatian wall as his free-kick is blocked in the Group H match in Bordeaux yesterday

Luca Bruno/AP

and Pablo Paz, brought in for Jose Chamot because Chamot already had a yellow card hovering over him, made several dangerous runs down the right.

Three players were booked on each side, including Croatia's Zvonimir Soldo of VfB Stuttgart, who, with a yellow card already in the bag, will miss the next game. The defender earned his booking for body-checking Ortega just outside the box, and brought on Lopez.

Gallardo had a clear-cut chance to score in the 19th minute, when he sneaked behind his defender in the penalty area, but his attempt at a spectacular bicycle kick only ended with a misfire.

Real Madrid's Suker, although out of favour at his Spanish club, has performed well for his country and came close to opening the scoring in the second minute when he moved onto a long ball from midfield, looping a header from just inside the box which beat Argentina keeper Carlos Roa but dropped onto the roof of the net.

Milan's Zvonimir Boban, back in the side after an off-back injury which had kept him out of the World Cup so far, rarely made any impression in the first half. He only once showed his skill, beating two defenders on a long run down the left, but hit the ball far too high when he attempted a looping side-foot shot to the far corner.

Simeone, unleashed by Passarella in the 69th minute, came close to making it 2-0 with 12 minutes of the game remaining when he took a pass from Juan Veron, swivelled in the box and hit a right-foot shot which Ladic just managed to

part, he shot wide.

But Gallardo was the revelation of the day, involved in most Argentinian moves until he was replaced by club-mate Sergio Bertini with eight minutes left. Gallardo might have

scored 10 minutes earlier when he shrugged off two challenges, beat a third defender but, having done this part, he shot wide.

ARGENTINA (4-4-2): Roa (Malmo); Pasarella (Internazionale), Jara (Beta Scuderi), Zamora (Internazionale), Pineda (Unicsel); Ortega (Valencia), Veron (Sampdoria Genoa); Gallardo (River Plate), Almeyda (Lazio); Lopez (River Plate), Substitutes: Lopez (Valencia) for Ortega, Stojanovic (Internazionale) for Zamora, Bertini (River Plate) for Gallardo, B2.

CROATIA (4-5-1): Ladic (Croatia Zagreb); Šuker (VfB Stuttgart), Jara (Beta Scuderi), Čačić (Real Madrid), Šimić (Real Madrid), Šimac (Real Madrid), Marković (Croatia Zagreb), Stanić (Parma), Asanović (Napoli), Substitutes: Šimac (Real Madrid), Šimac (Real Madrid), Stanić (Parma), Marković (Real Madrid), Substitutes: Šimac (Real Madrid), Šimac (Real Madrid), Stanić (Parma) for Marković, B2.

Referee: G Belkouli (Morocco).

TODAY'S MATCHES: ITALY V NORWAY (3.30), BRAZIL V CHILE (8.0)

Pride in defeat as Japan break their goal duck

By Phil Metcalfe
at Stade Gerland, Lyons

Jamaica
Whitmore 39.5
Japan
Nakayama 75
Att: 43,500

JAMAICA ACHIEVED their first World Cup victory and Japan scored their first goal yesterday in a Group H match won by the Reggae Boyz thanks to two goals by Theodore Whitmore. There may have only been pride at stake but judging from the performance of the players in an entertaining game, that was motivation enough.

Neither side had a chance of

reaching the second round on their World Cup debut after losing both previous games. Argentina, who top the group, beat Croatia 1-0 in the other Group H game yesterday.

Yet both sides were fully committed in a game packed with incident. Unfortunately for Japan they failed to profit until 15 minutes from the end. By then goals from Whitmore either side of half-time had put Jamaica in command and the players celebrated their victory with a jubilant lap of honour.

After two emphatic defeats, Jamaica restored some pride with yesterday's victory, said their Brazilian coach, René Simões. "I'm very proud of the team and Jamaica

must be," said Simões, who has said that he will now leave his post. "We have had three wonderful games and learnt a lot."

Japan leave with no points but they finally broke their duck through Masashi Nakayama in the 75th minute. His volley off a header by Brazilian-born substitute Wagner Lopes was greeted with joy from the largely Japanese crowd who had seen their talented side squander numerous chances. The Japanese players looked dejected as they left the

field after a third consecutive defeat that leaves a question mark over the future of the coach, Takeshi Okada, who hinted he may now resign.

"My contract runs only until the end of July," he said. "I didn't get my players to win a game that was winnable. I couldn't even make them draw when it was possible to draw. It is my responsibility for these results."

Okada watched helplessly as his side failed to make their domination count. From the opening whistle

Japan, prompted by the playmaker Hidetoshi Nakata, put together fluent, well-worked attacks. Japan had width, with the left wing-back Naoki Soma particularly impressive and Jamaica were forced to defend for long periods.

Japan's passing and movement off the ball was both attractive and effective in opening up a defence that conceded eight goals in their previous two matches. But Japan's finishing was indecisive and Okada must surely be wondering whether

he was right to leave Japan's leading striker, Kazuyoshi Miura, out of his squad.

Japan could have had a comfortable lead by half-time. In the 10th minute Nakata floated a cross to Shoji Jo but his powerful volley flew wide of the post. Jo was involved in again, putting in Hiroshi Nanami in the 29th minute, but Nanami rushed his shot and blasted over.

In contrast Jamaica took the lead having created little in the way of openings. In the 39th minute Whitmore broke into the box and fired a low shot past Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi. It was only the third goal conceded by Japan.

Japan again started well after the

break with Motohiro Yamaguchi and Masashi Nakayama both going close. However, just as it seemed the Japanese pressure must pay off Whitmore, who showed some neat touches throughout, struck again.

In the 45th minute he danced from the right flank and tucked a left-foot drive into the bottom corner before reeling away to celebrate.

Japan finally broke through in the 75th minute when Nakayama volleyed home after Lopes picked him out with a header.

JAPAN: Kawaguchi, Nakashita, Soma, Ibara, Jo, Akira, Yamaguchi, Nakayama, Tsuboi, Yamaguchi, Ono, Sakai, Saito, Kojima, Ito, Ochiai, Lopes, Tercer, Okano, Morishita, Saito, Narazaki, Hirano.

COACH: Lawrence, Goodeon, Gardner, Sasaki, Matsumoto, Gayle. Substitutes: Barrer, Ricketts, Sevill, Brown, Cargill, Saito, Williams, Boyd, Burton.

Referee: G Benítez (Austria).

THEY THINK IT'S ALL OVER... IT IS NOW.

ARMAGEDDON

WEEKEND REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • SHOPPING • TRAVEL

The control freak

In the Sixties, record producer Phil Spector was the obsessive button-pusher and knob-twiddler who created the 'wall of sound'. Today he stands accused of cheating his ex-wife Ronnie, and their former band The Ronettes, out of millions of dollars. And, in the courtroom, he's still calling the tune

BY DAVID USBORNE

Maybe it is just that the trial is already two weeks old, but the court officer, smart in his pressed uniform and black patent leather shoes, has obviously lost all interest. Shaving the jury box with empty chairs and this correspondent only, he is deep into a heavy tone entitled Dictionary of Symbolism. At the start of the afternoon he is on *Hyenas*, with some nice historic lithographs. By tea, he has reached *Magpies*.

There is not much to tell him, or any of us, that these are unique proceedings. Though this is meant to be the Manhattan Supreme Court, it is housed in an unprepossessing converted office building with linoleum floors and scuffed walls. And the effin man in the witness box hardly seems like an attention-grabber. He looks sad, really, a refugee from the Sixties with ugly hair too long over his collar, absurd platform shoes, aviator sunglasses and a black shirt with a dark blue tie and jacket.

Truth be told, the officer who can be no more than 25, had probably never heard of this man until now. Perhaps his name was just vaguely familiar. Phil Spector. Oh yeah, didn't he used to be real big in rock'n'roll, the producer of the Beatles and some other stuff? But isn't he meant to be some super-weirdo recluse these days, who never even appears in public? Like Howard Hughes, you know, the rich guy who went nuts and never cut his fingernails? That's the one.

Most fascinating of all, Spector flirts outrageously all the time with the judge, Paula Omansky. She may be dowdy, with her thinning brown hair and spectacles on a plastic bead chain, but his financial fate does rest in her hands after all.

He seems to have her in his pocket. "Bless you," he interrupts one time when she sneezes. Judge Omansky simmers appreciatively. When Spector's own lawyer repeatedly objects to a line of questions about the history of recording artists and the money they received for their work, Judge Omansky tells him not to bother. "I think that Mr Spector holds his own very nicely on historical questions," she says, giving him a knowing smile.

Continued on page 2

Judge Omansky, moreover, seems captivated by the historical detail. Spector's revelation that even the most famous melodies from the musical films of the Fifties and Sixties were lip-synched by their performers astonishes her. Elvis did it, says Spector. Even Bob Hope did it. "Everyone lip-synched in the movies," Spector informs the court. "Is that right?" interjects Judge Omansky, throwing back her head in theatrical disgust. For a moment the rest of the courtroom seems redundant to the entire proceedings.

The Judge likes it just as much when Spector is shown a picture of himself at the height of his success. "Who's that handsome lad?" he asks. And when Peitz asks Spector whether he won the nickname Boy Genius back in the Sixties, he shoots back: "Still am. We're under oath, aren't we?"

In the hallway outside, flashbulbs are going off. A short Hispanic lady in her fifties with deep red lipstick, black trousers and blouse, and a straw hat on flowing raven hair, walks in and takes a seat in the front row of the public gallery. Still the court officer doesn't look up. Does he still not understand? She is Ronnie Spector, the one-time lead singer of The Ronettes and ex-wife of Phil. What's more, this is the first time Phil and Ronnie have set eyes on each other since they split in 1974.

Or not set eyes on each other. Ronnie has shades that are even more nocturnal than the over-sized aviators worn by Phil. The Lord spare them from having to go so far as to exchange glances across the tiny courtroom. "Oh? Was she here?" Phil Spector asks in mock confusion when I talk to him at the close of the afternoon. "Well, I can't seem to get rid of her. Can I? She just keeps coming back."

Yes, Phil, she is back, and not on her own. With the two other members of the Ronettes (perhaps you remember those wonderful beehive hairdos and their several early-Sixties hits, such as "Be My Baby" and "I Can Hear Music"), Ronnie, her sister, Estelle Bennett, and their cousin, Nedra Talley Ross, are attempting to extract what they believe to be their due from Mr Spector. They are the plaintiffs in a lawsuit that says he, as their one-



Reuterrs

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The price of coal

Sir: Could we please have a greater sense of perspective about the current "crisis" facing the UK coal industry and Government's latest proposals to "save" it? A couple of questions to illustrate the point:

Which government, in a White Paper on Fuel Policy, accepted "the advice of the National Coal Board that a rundown of about 35,000 men a year would be manageable for the industry. On past experience, and taking account of natural wastage, such a rundown should not create a national problem?"

Answer: the Labour government in 1967 (Cmnd 3438 para 113). The annual job loss considered "manageable" in 1967 is more than three times the total number now employed in deep mining in England and Wales, and some seven times the number of jobs considered to be saved by the Government's latest announcement.

What do representatives of bodies like the Coalfields Communities Campaign and RJB Mining mean when they ask for a "level playing field" compared with other fuels used for electricity generation? Are they looking to repay the higher price received for UK deep-mined coal compared with alternative fuels and imported coal that British Coal and its successors like RJB received in coal contracts struck with generators in 1990 and renewed in 1997? Or do they really want a continuation of this subsidy, which, at its peak in the early 1990s, cost domestic customers more than £1bn a year in higher electricity prices?

Surely the real question that has to be asked about the coal industry today is how to make effective use of the resources available to central and local government to assist individuals moving to other jobs, and maybe to other areas where they can be employed providing products and services that are actually required? This must be better than simply seeking to eke out employment for a few more years at the expense of continued market distortions and higher prices for electricity consumers.

The Government's self-proclaimed great victory does not give much hope that politicians will provide a sense of perspective to a debate which has gone on for more than thirty years.

BOB TIVY
Fulbrook, Oxfordshire

Spoor of the spooks

Sir: Peter Moyes (letter, 25 June) is no doubt correct that the Zinoviev Letter was not the decisive factor in the outcome of the 1924 general election, but that does not mean it is a waste of time and money to try to get to the bottom of this fishy business.

It is surely a matter of the gravest concern if, as the latest Russian evidence suggests, MI6 was responsible for the forging of a document intended to discredit a prime minister and influence the result of a general election.

Whether the present Foreign Office inquiry will actually get at



Our series on the renovation of the HQ of the National Trust for Scotland, in Edinburgh's Charlotte Square, concludes with a view of the rear of the row Tom Pilston

Women at work

Sir: I thank Suzanne Moore ("Danger: women at work", 26 June) for her permission, but if I, a man, were to "strut around the office in skimpy T-shirts and shorts" I would at best be a figure of mirth. But a woman doing the same has a serious impact, and this shows either a wish to manipulate or a complete disregard of the feelings of the opposite sex.

Men and women have different body images, hormonal balances and biological imperatives. Perhaps by trying to counter these differences, we don't create a fairer world - only a more confused and unhappy one.

STEVE OSTLER
Sedgeburrow,
Worcestershire

Sir: The "bond babes" you use to illustrate Suzanne Moore's article look like smug, vacuous, stereotyped chumps. The intelligence and individuality which I'm sure they have is rendered invisible by the pantomime principal boy outfit.

If Wall Street likes its bankers to dress like Jack and the Beanstalk, so be it. But it scarcely makes for serious attitudes to women, or for that matter to their attractiveness.

IAN FLINTOFF
London WS6

IN BRIEF

Sir: In his fine and merited tribute to John Calder (Arts, 24 June), Baret Magarani states that Calder Publications is "unique" as the "last of the independent publishers" dedicated to serious literature.

Not so, but you have to look outside London to find them - from Wales and the West Country to Northumberland and Scotland. They vary from the microscopic to the medium-sized (such as Bloodaxe Books), but they continue to nurture new talent at a time when it is harder and harder for new talent to engage the interest of the large London publishing houses.

PETER LEWIS
Flambard Press
East Fourstones,
Northumberland

Sir: Your article "How to avoid a critical mess" (19 June) could be taken to imply that nuclear criticality issues at Dounreay are not properly considered.

Criticality is assessed entirely separately from other aspects of plant safety. Separate operations do not proceed unless they are within the limits set out by a criticality clearance certificate.

All the train companies are committed to a better integrated public transport system, and understand that this will only be achieved by co-operation, not by fomenting childish rivalries.

JAMES GORDON
Director General
Association of Train Operating Companies
London WC1

Sir: It is simply untrue to say

(leading article, 24 June) that rival train companies operating on the same lines won't co-operate on schedules and ticketing. Organising that co-operation is exactly the kind of role the Association of Train Operating Companies fulfils: we already do this for ticketing, for railcards, for the National Rail Enquiry Service and many other forms of land and water transport?

And what about catering? It is well for a Sunday Wigan-London train to arrive on time (not difficult with four and a half hours available). When I travelled on this train last March the lunchtime buffet, to which passengers were invited by the train manager, offered only sweets, chocolate and

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These are independently assessed and reviewed by our own safety experts, by independent teams and by our regulators, the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate.

Dr ROY NELSON
Dounreay Director
UK Atomic Energy Authority
Dounreay,
Caithness

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number, fax to 0171 293 2056 or e-mail to letters@independent.co.uk
E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity

the truth is, however, another matter. The Foreign Secretary has already said that the MI6 files for the relevant period are "incomplete" and "offer an inconclusive picture on whether the Zinoviev Letter was a forgery". There is another relevant class of documentation which I suspect will turn out to be in a similar state.

As the FO report's author, Gill Bennett, has indicated, the really interesting aspect of the affair is how the Zinoviev Letter came to be leaked to the *Daily Mail*. The prime suspect for the leak is in fact the head of MI6's (b) branch,

Joseph Ball, who went on to become the original spin-doctor and dirty-trickster at Tory Central Office. Last year's much-hyped release of early MI6 records provided ample evidence of an archival scorched-earth policy on the part of MI6's sister service. MI6 documentation regarding the inter-war period (which is apparently due for release this year or next) will doubtless have received the same treatment.

Won't it be ironic if Ms Bennett finds more *glasnost* in the KGB archives than in those of our own spooks?

DAVID TURNER
Borden, Kent

Gays and Cardinal

Sir: We have become used to the words "paedophile" and "homosexual" being linked in ill-informed comment, but I really thought that Cardinal Winning (Right of Reply, 25 June) would have taken the trouble to check his facts. Does he not know that HIV attacks both men and women, gay and straight? Does he really believe that "predatory" men (gay or straight) will take any notice of legal restraint?

Being homosexual is not a lifestyle. We did not choose our sexual orientation. We have to live with ourselves each day as we were created by God. The God that I love and worship (apparently in the same church as the Cardinal) did not make any mistakes when he created me or anyone else, gay or straight. Our human failings are just that; human and not of God. It is these failings which prevent us from seeing the true worth of God's creation.

GERALD NEWNHAM
Wetwyn Garden City,
Hertfordshire

Sir: Predatory male heterosexuals have been able to indulge in dangerous, immoral acts with

16-year-old girls since 1885. Why is Cardinal Winning only concerned now?

CHRISTOPHER ANTON
Birmingham

Sir: The Head of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland appears to believe that the fact that he has discovered a 20-year-old cutting in which paedophiles advocate a lower age of consent implies that the "gay lobby" can be accused of paedophilic motives.

If an archbishop really wishes to stick to that level of debate he should choose his ground more carefully. One does not have to go back anything like as far as 20 years to discover Catholic priests who are not only serial paedophiles but were in some cases protected from justice by the church.

MARION YNYS-MON
London N3

Don't interfere

Sir: Rosalind Miles ("Why did no one step in to save the life of Sasha Davies?", 25 June) fails to mention one crucial reason why people choose not to interfere.

Once witnessed a child being treated cruelly by a parent in the street, and also a child behaving

very badly in a train. On both occasions, with thumping heart, I expressed my disapproval of their behaviour. In both instances, I was greeted with venom and inverte, not to mention threats of violence by the parents. However anti-social people are, they resent being criticised by a third party. Instead of becoming self-analytical, they just spit out insults, claiming that it is none of your business.

MADELEINE NEAVE
London SW15

Train rage

Sir: Running on time, enough trains and competitiveness are not test enough for the privatised railways (leading article, 24 June). What about clear and accessible information about services nationwide, connections with other services, clarity about fares, and proper integration with other forms of land and water transport?

And what about catering? It is well for a Sunday Wigan-London train to arrive on time (not difficult with four and a half hours available). When I travelled on this train last March the lunchtime buffet, to which passengers were invited by the train manager, offered only sweets, chocolate and

one remaining piece of cake. My written complaint elicited only anodyne assurance that the company did its best for its customers (meaning passengers).

The real test for privatisation is when our railways come near to the standards of those in Germany, Austria or Switzerland, not only on punctuality but on everything else.

ANTHONY MORRIS
Brussels

Sir: It is simply untrue to say (leading article, 24 June) that rival train companies operating on the same lines won't co-operate on schedules and ticketing. Organising that co-operation is exactly the kind of role the Association of Train Operating Companies fulfils: we already do this for ticketing, for railcards, for the National Rail Enquiry Service and many other forms of land and water transport?

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Dr ROY NELSON
Dounreay Director
UK Atomic Energy Authority
Dounreay,
Caithness

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Phil Spector: the control freak



Phil Spector the Manhattan court jester (top) and posing next to Ronnie, and the Ronettes

livered the world-wide No 1, "You've Lost that Lovin' Feeling" and produced "River Deep - Mountain High" with Ike and Tina Turner. After that, he dropped out, but not for long. His association with the Beatles was in fact only as producer on one of their albums, Let It Be. Later he befriended John Lennon, for whom he produced "Imagine" and the Plastic Ono Band.

After working with the Beatles and Lennon, Spector disappeared, hitting himself up in his Spanish-style mansion off the Sunset Strip in Los Angeles. His fame today is above all as the one-time king of the record groove who simply vanished into thin air amidst rumours of eccentric behaviour and a vicious temper. Howard Hughes, indeed.

So now, on the stand in this grubby courtroom in New York, are we going to see him shrivel, like a night creature suddenly exposed to light?

Some of the back and forth has, after all, been ugly. Even though Judge Omansky has tried to stop them some nasty details of the marriage to Ronnie have bubbled through. According to his ex-wife, she signed the divorce contract only because of a threat of violence. She testified that Spector told her, "I'm going to kill you. I'll have a hit man kill you if you don't do what I tell you as far as signing those papers."

Nor has she painted a picture of marital happiness prior to the divorce. She claims that Spector had a barbed wire fence stretched

around the mansion the day following their wedding, to prevent her escaping. Apparently, he also stole her shoes and locked her in her room.

One Christmas Day, she recalled, he gave her an unexpected gift: twin six-year-old boys he had adopted without telling her. "I guess he wanted that barefoot and pregnant thing from me," she said after finishing her testimony. Eventually, she testified, she had to flee barefoot to her mother with just the clothes on her back. For a few years, she received support cheques from Spector, with "F*** Off" stamped in block capitals on the back. Copies of the cheques have been submitted as evidence.

With a curious blend of impish wit and arrogance, Mr Spector has been doing just fine on the stand. He has not, in short, been behaving the way a recluse is meant to.

"You don't have to get all Perry Mason with me," he retorts at one point to Ronnie's lawyer, Alexander Peltz. (The court officer lifts his eyes for an instant.) Occasionally he feigns confusion. "Say what?" he responds to one of Peltz's attempted jabs.

If genius he still is, these days Spector is exercising it in the music of the courtroom rather than the record groove. After the court session is over we talk a little about Ronnie. There is nothing but bitterness and bite. So, finally, I ask him about Judge Omansky. His voice warms instantly. "Oh, she's sweet," he says. Maybe he's winking. But I couldn't see past the aviators,

MONITOR

THE NEWS OF THE WORLD

Clinton in China • The Sun v Blair • Gay Age Of Consent • Bridget Jones • Bruce and Demi



Can Bill's engagement with China end happily?

PEOPLE'S DAILY China

China and the United States must adhere to the spirit of mutually respecting each other, and seeking common ground while preserving differences. There is no denying the fact that differences still exist on the Taiwan issue, human rights issue, and so on. We have always maintained we should take proper measures and conduct a dialogue on the basis of equal consultation to narrow or solve them. If some problems cannot be resolved, we can shelve them for the time being, so that they will not affect the overall development of relations between the two countries. We hope the US side will take a pragmatic and constructive attitude, so that these differences will not stand in the way of improving relations.

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S VISIT TO CHINA

Reaction to the first visit by a US leader since the Tiananmen massacre

NEW YORK TIMES US

China cannot be viewed through a single lens. But the Chinese leadership has already profited greatly from his visit. His very presence is an affirmation of Beijing's growing power. The Chinese are certainly strong enough to hear straight talk on American values, and a presidential statement of solidarity with the democrats in Chinese society. A show of presidential will would not disrupt the trip. It might even make it memorable.

HONG KONG STANDARD

Washington is said to have a firm and pragmatic China policy now. The trouble is, Congress has one too – a Cold War one formulated on the ambitions of megastar China dissidents in the US, who have the unstinting backing of the human rights mafia.

THE WASHINGTON TIMES US

Criticism of Mr Clinton's all-carrots-and-no-sticks policy towards China is portrayed as a rejection of

engagement. Not so. What it amounts to is the view that there are many ways to engage other countries, but they all should place at the centre American national interests. Mr Clinton's critics here at home are concerned that both are getting short shrift in the name of trade.

JAPAN TIMES

There is an important dimension to the Sino-US relationship: Japan's relations with the US. It is vitally important all three countries see the strategic triangle as a positive-sum relationship and not a zero-sum affair, in which one side profits at the expense of another. It is unfortunate that Clinton could not find time to stop in Japan after his visit. It would have been a good opportunity to make engagement more of a policy and less of a slogan.

THE GUARDIAN

Bishops and legislators have quite separate roles. Indeed, even the bishops concede that "actions may be legal without being morally right". Precisely. Reform is long overdue. Equal treatment is a basic human right.

RICHARD LITTLEJOHN THE SUN

Why is the Government so enthusiastically and in such numbers to the gay lobby not only are politicians disregarding public opinion, they are also choosing to ignore the guidance of all the main religious communities in this country?

DAILY MAIL

By surrendering so enthusiastically and in such numbers to the gay lobby not only are politicians disregarding public opinion, they are also choosing to ignore the guidance of all the main religious communities in this country.

MISCELLANEOUS

SOUTH KOREAN HERALD

Tony Blair may be surprised to find his name has become a topic of political discussion in South Korea. Some young lawmakers have instituted a reform campaign, citing Blair as their role model. But the elders dismiss their younger colleagues in their forties and early fifties as too inexperienced to qualify as "Tony Blair" candidates.

JORDAN STAR

Jordanian women are slowly getting there. If you are a married woman, you will soon be able to get your own passport without the consent of your spouse.

THE NATION

It is argued that the collapse of our social fabric is reflected in the law and order situation. The recent hold-up of a travel agency, located opposite the office of the Superintendent of Police, by four seemingly educated youths, clearly points towards this painful phenomenon. The most distressing aspect was the inability of the police to give chase to the criminals who disappeared on foot; of the two police vehicles, one suffered a mechanical breakdown and the other was out of petrol.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"We are a nation of yobs. Now that we don't have a war, what's wrong with a good punch-up?"
The Dowager Marchioness of Reading

"The World Cup is supposed to be an image of friendship and men are going to be like children and play with their ball. But what happens? They fight. That's an image of how the world is."
Jeanne Moreau, actress

"The hideous apparel favoured by the metropolitan English make the denizens of former East Berlin look chic by comparison."
Barry Humphries, entertainer

"Whatever their immediate popularity, the Spice Girls are not as significant as WH Auden"
Sir Peter Hall, theatre director

"Sex and tennis are two peas in a pod, as inseparable as Torville and Dean."
Buster Mottram, tennis player

"If you were Frank Sinatra's friend, he was a friend for life. If you were his enemy, you stayed his enemy. Case closed."
Tony Bennett, crooner

"You must not wear condoms. They do not stop disease. Anyone who tells you otherwise is a liar. They are designed to stop us [blacks] from breeding."
Winnie Mandela

AGE OF CONSENT

Following the vote to permit gay sex at age 16

THE PINK PAPER

There is a view that winning an equal age of consent has been an easy victory – that the Labour Government is making one concession to gay rights and there it will stick. There are no political short-cuts. We would be naive if we thought that presenting a list of demands to the Labour government, however huge their majority, will guarantee change. The Labour

Government will only move when they are convinced that society accepts the changes for which we are fighting.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Sooner than Tony Blair thinks, most parents will view him with contempt for espousing family values while effectively voting for child abuse. Their children have been set free – but, before long, they will be everywhere in chains

EVENING STANDARD

Teenagers are often confused about their own sexuality. There

remain good reasons for suggesting that if the issue is in the balance, they are more likely to have happy and fulfilled lives as heterosexuals, because of sexual and reproductive realities which no law can change.

BIRMINGHAM POST

Because there are now some openly homosexual MPs does not mean the country as a whole takes the same liberal view of homosexuality.

Given that homosexuality is physically dangerous – some would say morally and psychologically dangerous as well – it is surely unwise of MPs

to equate it legally with heterosexuals.

Taken to extremes, this legislation could condemn some vulnerable young men to death from AIDS before they were mature enough to recognise the importance of warnings about "safe sex".

RICHARD LITTLEJOHN THE SUN

Why is the Government so enthusiastically and in such numbers to the gay lobby not only are politicians disregarding public opinion, they are also choosing to ignore the guidance of all the main religious communities in this country?

BOOK REVIEW

'BRIDGET JONES'S DIARY', (US EDITION)
BY HELEN FIELDING

AMAZON.COM

(Internet)

Bridget Jones's Diary began as a column in the London *Independent* and struck a chord with readers of all sexes and sizes. In strokes simultaneously broad and subtle, Helen Fielding reveals the lighter side of despotic self-doubt and obsession, and also satirises everything from self-help books (they don't sound half as sensible to Bridget when she's sober) to feng shui, *Cosmopolitan* style.

PHILADELPHIA ENQUIRER

You'll be hanging on her every breathless, self-loathing utterance – hoping, as you hope for a friend, that she'll find happiness, true love, and a way to eat Milk Tray chocolates without beating herself up afterwards.

DALLAS MORNING NEWS

Bridget's romantic misadventures are not quite resolved by the final chapter, but she appears well on the road to a happily-ever-after conclusion. The *Pride and Prejudice* hints notwithstanding, it was still a little disappointing to see a character so fresh headed toward an ending rather like the Jane Austen adaptations Bridget admires on the telly. Even a too-tidy ending can't dilute the cheeky charm of this book, however.

NEW YORK TIMES

It would be a shame to spend too much time searching for meaning in a book that's this much fun to zip through, but we're going to be hearing a lot about Bridget (and Fielding) in the coming months, so here goes. People will be passing around copies of *Bridget Jones's Diary* for a reason: it captures neatly the way modern women teeter between "I am a woman" independence and a pathetic girly desire to be all things to all men.

ATHLONE OBSERVER

Ireland

Poor Derek Davis got an awful roasting for his handling of the Rose of Tralee on TV. Apparently, viewers were upset by his telling one contestant he was able to crack a walnut with his buttocks, and another that some of his old schoolmates had been arrested for "sleep worrying". But was Derek simply trying to introduce some good old genuine Irish humour into an event about as Irish as the Fourth of July?

The road to liberty, via Linford Christie's lunchbox

V BLAIR
The tabloid's
back on the
Europe

STIN
dangerous
but he seems
to be bound
the single
party

WESMAN
and
on
the
Shan

TIMES

19

CELEB

OBITUARIES

44

FOR A whole week now I have been unable to think of anything except Linford Christie's lunchbox.

Don't mistake me: I have been consumed neither by envy nor nostalgia. However tragic it is to see the lunchbox of youth declining into the afternoon-tea trolley of middle age, a man must accept what nature intends for him. Soon it will be the cold appetizer tray of senility, and after that, the worm's breakfast. To which fate all lunchboxes, not excluding Linford Christie's, must come.

So no, it is not the ploughman's itself I have been thinking about all week, but the exemplary blankness of His Honour Mr Justice Popplewell — presiding judge in Christie's libel suit against John McVicar — as to the precise meaning of the term lunchbox when

applied with approbation to an athlete, or to anyone else for that matter.

In the good old days, when all our lunchboxes were as full and unreliable as a Virgin train, we expected High Court judges to show ignorance of popular people and their appearances. Let us set an example to the rest of us. Call it negative vicariousness.

We needed someone not to know anything about all those personalities of whom we knew too much, to be free of the world's little-tattle on our behalf, in much the same way as we want there to be celibacy in the world without our having to be the ones who practise it.

A priest has higher things on his mind than carnality and a judge's brain is too stocked with the

refined minutiae of the law for there to be room in it for the trivialities of popular culture — wasn't that the way we understood it?

Such an understanding rested on an assumption of value: some things mattered more than others, whether we could be bothered to aspire to them ourselves or not. We knew our place in the scheme of things. We were given over to junk. It was up to the toffs to address the important stuff.

Now, of course, there is no such thing as junk, unless it's self-consciously parodic junk, in which case it isn't junk at all. I tried to get the notion of junk across to Chris Smith once, in the days when his crimes against culture were limited to shadowing it.

We were sharing a platform during a public debate on the pre-

sent state of painting. He accused me of being an elitist — which is the word people who don't have discriminated invariably use of people who do — and promised us, once his party came to power, a brave new egalitarian world of

paintings in trains. Painting in trains! — we couldn't wait.

Still better a painting in a train. I say, than a poster of a Spice Girl on a platform. "A Spice Girl, Your Honour? Damned if I know! Ask Blair! He's the junkhead."

Interesting that in a country which has elevated junk and junks the elevated, the falsity of our government's populism should nonetheless be so evident to everyone. This is a good sign. It means that we know there is a difference between Schubert and Oasis — whoever Oasis is — after all.

And we don't trust the toffs when they pretend to be as indiscriminately over-informed as we are. Mr Justice Popplewell sets a grander example. And shows the way to a better life.

Am I saying one lives better if

one knows nothing of the likes of Linford Christie or his lunchbox? I am, actually, yes.

May I cite an example? I have squandered too many precious brain cells familiarising myself with the names of yodelers and spoon-benders to have lived what can truly be called a happy life; but

on an assignment for a Sunday newspaper a few years ago, I came as close as any trash-debilitated person has a right to expect he ever will come to euphoria.

I had been sent to Milan for Fashion Week, fashion being one of the new emptily spinning spheres of unease in which I wasn't expert. Of fashion I knew zilch. Coco Chanel — that was the only fashion name I thought I'd heard of that's if he (or was it she?) wasn't in fact a clown.

And now here I was, as culturally uncluttered as an alien, standing in a famous fashion house changing room (so they told me), and no more impressed, no more stirred, no more awed, than if I'd been back in the school playground adding my penny to the pot which Reeny Samuels insisted on before she'd show us her drawers.

Claudia Schiffer? Pish! Kate Moss? Tush! Tiny tits are tiny tits. Deserving of remark only if you recognise their owners. But I recognised no one and so was unenthusiastic, detached, a free man.

The way to liberty — that is what Mr Justice Popplewell's obliviousness teaches us. I trust the lesson has been learnt by his son, the cricketer Nigel Popplewell — not that I expect His Honour to know who he is.



HOWARD JACOBSON

Architect of a new nation

SATURDAY PROFILE

JOHN HUME

JOHN HUME infuriates many academics because he is not just leader of a political party, but also a conceptualiser and thinker on a grand scale; he is not just a politician, but also the instigator of whole new theories of conflict resolution.

While this may greatly irritate those academics who believe that this sort of thing is best left to them, it has excited the support and admiration of Irish nationalists. Yesterday Hume received his electoral award for this from voters, who clearly regard him as the architect of the peace process.

The idea of an inclusive process, with room in it for the extremes of both republicanism and loyalism, has come to be taken so much for granted that it is instructive to recall just how controversial a concept it was just a few years ago.

As the election results vividly illustrate, that notion has yet to take firm root within Unionism, a movement that shows all the signs of being badly split and confused about the new Northern Ireland mapped out in the Good Friday agreement.

But the results also showed that nationalists are practically unanimous in embracing the new philosophy, many voting SDLP as a gesture of gratitude for John Hume's initiative in finding what many had feared did not exist: a potential exit route from the Troubles.

The great divide within Irish nationalism has always been between those who, like the IRA, believed that violence was the best way of achieving their aims, and those like Hume who argued for using political means alone.

The early part of his career, first as a civil rights activist on the streets and later as a politi-

cian, was about building power and influence for northern nationalism. This had traditionally been a community characterised by dolefully impotent isolation. His career has taken him from Londonderry's streets to the most rarified corridors of power.

Born in Londonderry in 1937, he was in the first year to benefit from the 11-plus system, which made free grammar school places available to all. His grandfather was Scots Presbyterian; his father, John, a riveter in the Bogside, endured the city's traditionally high unemployment for much of his life. Hume's early years were spent in poverty, but education led first to a career in teaching and then to the running of a sizeable credit union.

Hume built up his influence by becoming a figure of note not just in Belfast, but also in Dublin, London, Brussels and Washington. An odd situation developed in the Irish Republic in particular, where staunch supporters of southern parties looked for guidance on the north to their own leaders, but to Hume. As a result there is a fair amount of resentment against him among the political élite in Dublin, who find it hard to accept a figure outside the state wielding so much influence within it.

In addition to the south, the American card lent a whole new dimension to northern nationalism, building up as it has to the point where Bill Clinton takes a strong personal interest in the peace process.

Gerry Adams may command greater popularity

tion, but Hume has automatic access to the most powerful Washington decision-makers.

This process of empowerment of northern nationalism led to the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985, when London and Dublin laid aside many of their differences and agreed to regard Northern Ireland as a common concern, best managed jointly. Again, Hume was regarded as being among the accord's architects.

When later he came up with the idea of the peace process, however, it was seen as very much a solo run. In one sense, the concept evolved out of the Anglo-Irish agreement, since this had recognised Irish nationalism as a legitimate identity, the accord standing in itself as a sign of what political lobbying could achieve.

It showed Sinn Fein and the IRA that northern nationalists could make progress without killing people, but it very definitely did not invite them to participate in the political field. That came next, beginning in 1988, when Hume made a serious pitch to the republicans and opened talks with Adams.

The republican worry had been that simply calling off their campaign of terrorism would leave their supporters without influence, a friendless and apparently vanquished

community that would be prey to ostracism and discrimination by an unreconstructed Unionism. Hume argued that abandoning violence would lead to more, not less, political clout.

All this can now be made to sound all very straightforward and logical. It is easy to forget

just how much controversy those original Hume-Adams contacts were. They represented a spectacular violation of the general protocol that constitutional representatives should not speak to those associated with violence.

When word of the contacts leaked out, there was a furious firestorm of condemnation.

This was maintained as the contacts continued, since as the talks were going on IRA bombings and shootings continued. At many points the pressure on Hume to give up was intense, as many found it impossible to reconcile the idea of a peace process with the fact that the killing had not stopped. Privately and publicly, many clamoured for him to desist.

His lowest moment probably came in late 1993 when an IRA bomb exploded prematurely in a Shankill Road shop, killing not only the bomber but also nine Protestant men, women and children. The peace process seemed to be in ruins.

Hume was lambasted by various senior southern Irish politicians for "using Provocative" and for making common cause with paramilitaries. A senior Unionist leader said he had "sold his soul to the devil."

A Dublin newspaper noted: "Mr Hume is on the highest of high wires, with no safety net and with a great many enemies who would only too happily see him plunge to his political doom."

One columnist declared: "John Hume has been evasive and illogical. He is increasingly irrational. He is clearly intent on sucking us into an immoral relationship with active terrorists. Mr Hume and Mr Adams have nothing to offer."

One of the most poignant moments came when Hume at-



Peacemaker and party leader, he is now the most powerful Irish political figure in the world

Tom Pilston

tended the funeral of one of the victims of loyalist retaliation for the Shankill Road bombing.

He was approached by the daughter of one victim, who told him: "Mr Hume, we've just buried my father. My family wants you to know that when we said the rosary around my daddy's coffin we were praying for you, for what you're trying to do bring peace."

The television cameras captured the scene as Hume nodded, held her hands, then turned away and broke down in tears.

The pressure took such a toll on him that he collapsed and had to be taken to hospital.

There he received 1,169 letters, notes and get-well cards and other cards, most of them urging him to persevere. When

IRA and loyalist ceasefires eventually came about, followed by the potentially historic compromise of the Good Friday Agreement, most if not all the risk-taking the SDLP has not only held but also consolidated its position as the main nationalist voice.

Of continuing concern within the SDLP, however, was the worry that Hume might have sacrificed the interests of the party to the extent that Sinn Fein could overtake it to become the largest nationalist grouping in Northern Ireland. Many party members were worried sick that the republicans might take over.

Sinn Fein has certainly prospered electorally, with its share of the vote rising from 11 per cent to 17 per cent in the last decade. The fear in SDLP ranks was that republicans,

having failed to win their war, might instead manage to win the peace. Yesterday's result shows, however, that after all the risk-taking the SDLP has not only held but also consolidated its position as the main nationalist voice.

But yesterday's success brings, as ever, fresh challenges. The talk in recent times has been of impending change in Northern Ireland, and how best it may be managed and fashioned constructively. Nationalists are enthusiastic for change, while Unionists tend to worry about it, and even the most moderate Unionists will find it hard to come to terms with such a large SDLP vote.

Hume is already a Westminster MP and a Euro-MP as

well as his party's principal link to Washington and Irish America. It remains to be seen how deeply he will wish to become involved in a new assembly which, with a strong Paisley presence, cannot be expected to run smoothly. His wife, Pat, who for decades has worked in his political office, wants him to slow down, but political pressures might keep him in the front line of politics.

Whatever his choice, the history books will say he helped to transform a northern nationalism that was friendless, fatalistic and apathetic, into a vibrant political force. In the process he has made himself into the most powerful Irish political figure in the world.

DAVID MCKITTRICK

Hooligans, the product of a high civilisation

SATURDAY ESSAY by MARIO VARGAS LLOSA



Tribalism can reappear in the anonymity of the crowd

THOSE WHO have never stepped on English soil, and know the country only by the deeds of its soccer fans, have every right in the world to believe that the civilised society that produced democracy and Shakespeare's verse has declined to the edge of barbarism.

Indeed, the spectacle of hordes of drunken English hooligans attacking passers-by, charging adversary fans with sticks, stones and knives, engaging in ferocious battles against the police, smashing shop windows and vehicles and, at times, the very stands of the stadiums, has come to be an inevitable corollary of major international matches played in England, and of many in the British league.

And yet the fact is that for anyone who lives there, England is a country exceptionally peaceful and well mannered, where the taxi drivers do not attempt to skin the unwary tourist, as happens often in Paris; where the shop clerks are not rude to customers who poorly pronounce or fail to speak their language, as happens often in Germany and the United States; and where xenophobia and racism, plagues from which no society known to me is exempt, are less explicit than elsewhere.

Among the great cities of the

world, London is one of the safest. Women travel alone on the Underground to the middle of the night, and I can think of no quarter, even including Brixton, as dangerous for the lone foreigner as is, say, Harlem, or Clichy.

Moreover, hooligan violence has to do with football alone. No other sport or mass spectacle from political meetings to the concerts of rock idols — has generated a similar destructive supposition. On the contrary, I have always been surprised at the lack of rowdiness and vandalism that characterises large gatherings in England — where, for this same reason, the presence of security forces is usually insignificant. And where the (unarmed) police, moreover, inspire confidence, not fear.

How do we explain this curious phenomenon? Let us discard from the start the ideological thesis, according to which hooligan violence is a heritage of Mrs Thatcher's economic reforms, which have burdened British society with the deepest imbalances and pockets of poverty in Western Europe.

In fact, Great Britain has today one of the world's most prosperous economies; and, thanks to those reforms, which Tony Blair's government is

deepening, unemployment has been reduced to a minimum level — about 6 per cent. If poverty and the abyss between rich and poor were determining factors in football violence, then every week there would be real massacres throughout the Third World and a good part of the First.

But if the reason is not socio-economic, as the progressives would like it to be, what then is the reason why one of the planet's most civilised countries experiences this systematic outburst of barbarism, the phenomenon of football vandalism?

An interesting clue lies in the background and character of the English supporters who were arrested and jailed after the Marseilles hooligan. What a surprise: one man, James Shayler — 100kg of muscle, beer belly and pirate tattoos on his forearms — seen by millions of television viewers smashing a Mercedes-Benz to smithereens, is a most respectable citizen, who adores his wife and daughter, and helps old ladies at road crossings.

Neighbours interviewed by journalists declare in amazement that it is hard for them to

recognise the aggressive beast who battered Tunisians in Marseilles on 15 June as in the same civilised neighbour they thought incapable of killing a fly.

Similar amazement was evidenced by employees at the Liverpool Central Post Office, on learning that two fellow workers, known to their superiors as punctual and diligent civil servants, figure among the drunken vandals sentenced in Marseilles, in a police court, to two months of prison and a

year's exclusion from French territory.

The list of hooligans caught red-handed in the destructive orgy could hardly be more impressive: an engineer, an electrician, a railwayman, a fireman, a pilot — among other employees, students and skilled workers. We find among them no outcasts or jobless persons — those people on the margins of society whom a persistent sociological stereotype presents as the protagonists of eccentric and unbalanced per-

sonalities. Fascistic groups, sadists, desperados. But these are the exception, not the rule — the files attracted to the score, not the infection that causes it.

In fact, we need no statistics to conclude that the average fan can hardly be fitted into the stereotype of the jobless citizen, thrown into unemployment by inhuman industrial restructuring, scraping a survival living only thanks to social security.

A person in this situation lacks the basic resources that allow the hooligan to do what he does: to move about in trains, planes and buses to different European cities, to buy expensive stadium tickets, and sleep himself in litres of beer. Even a hooligan must pay for the alcohol that allows him to short-circuit all the governing mechanisms civilisation instils into the individual to inhibit him from giving free rein to his instincts and passions, and constrain him to act according to certain norms and dictates of reason.

It is not the victims, but the beneficiaries of so-called civilisation who make up the bulk of these barbarous hordes who sow violence around the stadiums and burn the stands. Their ranks offer cover and fertile ground for the designs of eccentric and unbalanced per-

tained that the *raison d'être* of literature was to enable man to experience — in fictions — all of what he had renounced in order to make community life possible.

It is along these lines that we must understand the irrational brutality of the English hooligans. Privileged citizens of a society which through a thousand years of history has been steadily reducing the precariousness, despotism, helplessness, poverty, ignorance and rule of brute force in human relations that are the invariable norm in primitive societies, they now find themselves bored, and yearn for what they have lost: uncertainty, risk, life lived as instinct and passion.

Claudia Parsons

A trip to Canada in her seventies, Claudia Parsons was being driven by a much younger male relative on a busy freeway when they had a flat tire. Parsons' instinct is to leap out of the car saying "here's the jack!" This wasn't hesitation - such a minor running pair would have been nothing to one of the first three women to graduate in engineering in England (at Loughborough) soon after the First World War. At her death she is the oldest member of the Society of Women Engineers.

She was born in 1900 in the Indian hill station of Simla; her Anglo-Indian father was a major in the Indian Staff Corps. At the age of 16, Claudia and her older sister Betty were taken to England and left the care of an overbearing, temperamental and sometimes cruel aunt. On her father's death when she was 12, her overriding emotion was relief that our mother would now permanently home.

In her fluently written, funny and ten gripping autobiography, *Century Story* (1985), written in her octies, Parsons charts her full adventurous life: her numerous travels at a time when it was rare for women to travel at all, and certainly not alone, as she did, or in the company of men to whom they weren't married, as she did; and her joys of earning money (of which she is always short) as a chauffeur-companion-mechanic for wealthy venturesome and, more lucratively, a writer ("Writing was almost a seance in the Parsons family").

Aside from writing stories and travel pieces, she had considerable success with her 1936 novel *Brighter Passage* and with her travel book *Abandonment* (1941). The latter was only prevented from running into a third reprint by the shortage of paper during the Second World War; then she worked in a munitions factory (as a skilled engineer), where a sense of justice prompted her to take her boss to court on behalf of fellow workers. She also later had spells as a church restorer, which owned a manual.

When she was 10, she was among a crowd who watched the royal procession on the occasion of George V's coronation. The man next to her told her to tell her grandchildren that she'd witnessed this scene standing next to a veteran of the Crimean War.

But Claudia never had grandchildren. She never married. On being asked why not during a newspaper interview she gave at the age of 95, she said of men: "They very often threatened to stop me doing what I wanted to do."

There were certainly love affairs and there were many strong friendships with men. There was the diplomat who "had decided never to marry... as he was a non-marrying man, and as I was myself a bit of a loner and could understand his feelings, I decided to be a non-marrying wife, to meet and live with him whenever chance offered..." and there was the wacky and fun Kilton Stewart, an American psychoanalyst she encountered by chance on a bus in Angkor when she had uncharacteristically miscalculated her funds

She had a ridiculously self-deprecating view of herself as a clownish character and a charlatan in most of the jobs I took up'

and ended up travelling free by sitting on the mailbags.

He then resurfaced in Calcutta, where Parsons was staying with her younger sister Avis and her husband, and together they bought a second-hand 1925 Studebaker and in April 1938 embarked on a hugely eventful journey masterminded by her back to England, which took them via India, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia.

There were countless breakdowns, the reasons for them succinctly described ("It was a worn seating in which the distributor shaft was mounted"). Being a car lover, she often referred to her cars in anthropomorphic terms ("Thanks to Baker's patient nature...") but she was never a car bore. As for the

nature of her relationship with Kilton, she left us guessing.

Parson's sketches of people encountered on her travels were never cruel, but always made their point on a voyage from Vancouver to Yokohama (where the war against China was raging and she having had all her money stolen sold her clothes and wrote articles for the *Japan Times* to earn more), she wrote:

I had a missionary in my cabin going to convert the Chinese... and she practised meanwhile on me. God, however, came to my rescue by rocking the boat, when preacher and subject fell sick. Conversion was postponed.

When not travelling, Parsons returned to the Elizabethan house in the village of Wotton, near Guildford, where she lived with her mother, aunt (still feared, but loved) and sister Betty from 1924 onwards. Betty (who also had the writing disease) once described Claudia as "one who had broken the ice of convention that held women down to certain jobs but denied them others, and at a time when to the majority of people the world was unknown". And it was Betty who urged her, long before her own death in 1986, to write her autobiography.

Betty's seal of approval was very important to Claudia, who despite being one of the most capable, well-read, funny and dignified people I have ever met, had a ridiculously self-deprecating view of herself as "a clownish character and a charlatan in most of the jobs I took up".

Even though the more infuriating aspects of old age forced Claudia Parsons to move into a home over a year ago, the emotional self-sufficiency, indomitable common sense and sense of humour which had seen her through so many journeys, stood her in good stead and she never once complained nor appeared to pine for the house she'd lived in for over 70 years, which contained a lot of furniture made by her.

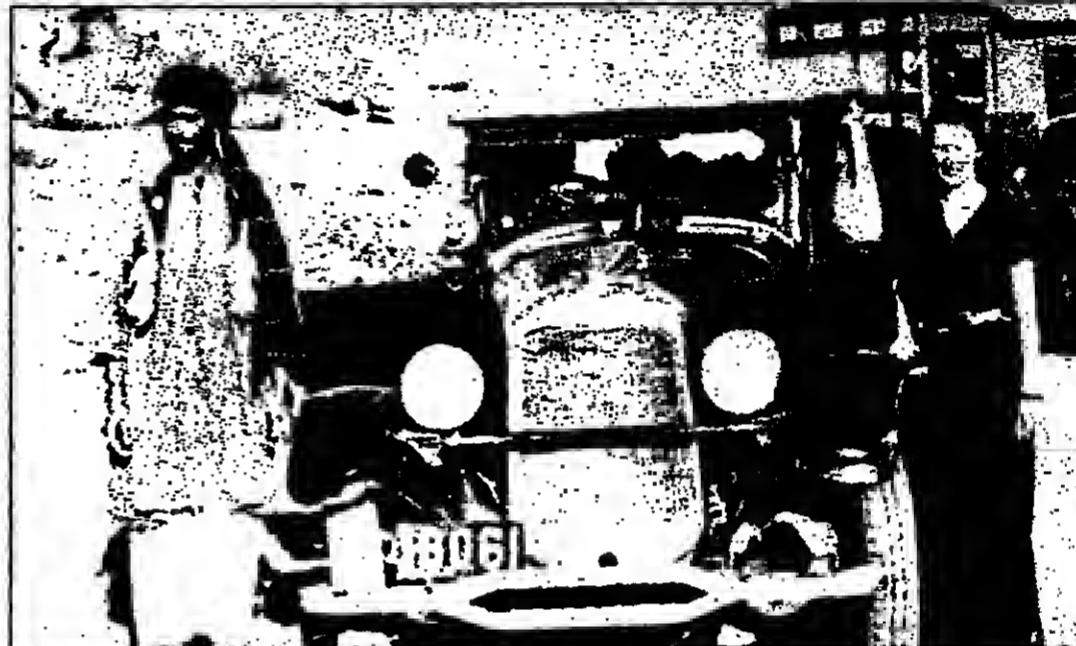
Soon after she moved, I visited her and e-mailed my sister in the States: "I expected to feel terribly depressed, but instead came away as I always do having seen Claudia, feeling nourished, uplifted and happy."

Emma Parsons

Claudia Parsons, writer and traveller: born Simla, India 15 August 1900; died Cranleigh, Surrey 5 June 1998.



Parsons in 1926; and, below, next to her 'patient' Sindebaker in Afghanistan, 1938



The Rev Raymond George



RAYMOND GEORGE was one of the remotest Methodist scholars of his generation, and an outstanding ecumenical educator.

He was born in Gloucester in 1912, educated locally at the Crypt School. In 1931 he went up to Balliol College, Oxford, as an Exhibitor, and gained a double First in classical Greats. He remained intensely loyal to his college, and would quote Hilaire Belloc's lines with pride:

"Balliol made me, Balliol fed me, Whatever I had she gave me again; if the best of Balliol loved and led me, I'd be with you, Balliol men."

He trained for the Methodist ministry at Wesley House, Cambridge, took another First in the theological Tripos, and then spent the year 1937/38 as Finch scholar, studying under Professors Heller and Ullmann in the University of Marburg. He had first-hand experience of Nazism, saw Hitler arriving for a rally at Nuremberg, and witnessed the tension between pro- and anti-Nazi teachers in the university. In the summer of 1939, as the culmination of his German mentor,

he revisited Marburg on holiday. Heller was appalled: "Why have you come back? We're going to war with you!" Raymond replied, with directness rather than noise: "When?" Heller: "Not till the harvest is in."

This international dimension of his ministry proved lifelong. In 1949, as a representative of the British Council of Churches, Raymond George paid a fraternal visit to the Kirchliche Hochschule Zehlendorf, Berlin, and over the years represented the British Methodist Conference at the North-West German Annual Conference, as well as those of Ghana and Nigeria.

He gave distinguished service on the Executive of the World Methodist Council, and was the first Secretary of the quadrennial Oxford Institute of Theological Studies, which from 1958 has brought together Methodist scholars from across the world. He also served on the World Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission, and acted as Secretary of its Theological Commission on Worship (Europe), with Bishop Kenneth Riches his colleague as Chairman.

He was a WCC observer on the Roman Catholic Liturgical Consultum at the Vatican from 1966 onwards, advised on the revision of the Liturgy, and was completely at home in proceedings conducted entirely in Latin.

Yet, though a committed ecumenist, he was rooted in the High Wesleyan tradition of Methodism. The hymns of Charles Wesley informed his theology, worship and life.

He gave a lifetime of service to the theological colleges of Methodism - in Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, London and Bristol.

The core of his teaching ministry lay in his long spell of service at Wesley College, Headingley. He taught there from 1946 to 1967, and was Principal from 1961.

After the college was transferred to Bristol, he stayed on for a further year (1967/68), to act as head of the Department of Theology at Leeds University, during Professor John Tinsley's absence on sabbatical. He ran the department with exemplary care and efficiency, and gave further proof, if any were needed, of his professorial calibre.

He taught for 53 years in the Methodist colleges and the universities to which they are linked. His only experience of being in pastoral charge of churches as a circuit minister came in the war years at Manchester. Yet his pastoral office found full expression in his work of teaching, and he was to generations of students a trusted confidant and guide, during their college training and afterwards.

In retirement, Raymond George

taught part-time at Wesley College, Bristol, and was Warden of John Wesley's Chapel ("The New Room"), Bristol, from 1982 to 1995. He was unmarried, but was a most sociable and gregarious man, with a genius for friendship. The milk of human kindness flowed from him, and his humour and humanity endeared him to all who knew him. He combined humble faith, great learning, and the simplicity of Christ.

John A. Newton

Alfred Raymond George, minister of the church: born Gloucester 26 November 1912; ordained 1940; Tutor, Wesley College, Headingley 1946-67; Principal 1961-67; Associate Lecturer, Leeds University 1946-67, Acting Head, Department of Theology 1967-68; Principal, Richmond College, London University 1968-72; Tutor, Wesley College, Bristol 1972-81; President, Methodist Conference 1975-76; Moderator, Free Church Federal Council 1979-80; Warden, John Wesley's Chapel, Bristol 1982-95; Chairman, Joint Liturgical Group 1984-89; died Bristol 22 June 1998.

Tall, slim, and debonair, with an elegant carriage both on and off the ice, Peter Jordan stood out in any company. His well-modulated voice and his command of the Queen's English made him an eloquent spokesman for the art of figure skating.

Dennis L. Bird

Peter Jordan, architect and ice skater: born 4 February 1915; twice married (two daughters); died Epsom, Surrey 17 May 1998.

Professor Michael Wilks



MICHAEL WILKS's chief early work, *The Problems of Sovereignty in the Later Middle Ages*, tackled a subject as diffuse and difficult as the period with which he was dealing as it is today.

The nature of sovereignty and here it resides has always been aorny question and furious debate is raged amongst political theorists throughout the ages. Wilks was fortunate to find in the period 1350-1350 vigorous contemporary defence of a papacy with its claim to universal sovereignty, against the new concept of popular sovereignty within developing states, where the promotion of individual interests was paramount. His great achievement was set in its political context the *Imma de peste ecclesiastica* (Augustinus Triumphus of Anagni) (died 1328), a complex de-

fence of papal supremacy in more than half a million words. This treatise, described as "one of the half dozen most influential and important works ever written on the nature of papal supremacy in the Middle Ages", formed the basis for Wilks's innovative study.

Published in 1963 by the Cambridge University Press, this substantial volume established him in the first rank of international scholars and is still acknowledged as a definitive work in this field.

Wilks was born in 1930. After taking undergraduate and post-graduate degrees in History at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he worked with the great medievalist Walter Ullmann, Wilks was awarded a Research Fellowship at Trinity and later, in 1958, the Prince Consort Medal, an honour for which

he never ceased to feel pride. Although throughout his life he remained a loyal disciple of Ullmann, he was both receptive and generous to those of differing views, such as Michele Maccarone, the value of whose work on the nature of papal power he appreciated far more than did his teacher.

Following his success at Trinity, many avenues opened before him but he willingly chose to meet the challenge presented by the tradition of mature study at Birkbeck College within London University, something which he was to defend vigorously throughout the whole of his life.

During this time, a great number of his articles appeared in learned journals, all of them stimulating to his peers and contributing still more to Wilks's academic reputation in Europe and the United States. At

Birkbeck he proceeded from Lecturer in 1957 to Reader in 1967 and was appointed to a personal chair of history in 1974.

The History department of Birkbeck College has a tradition of mature students in full-time employment undertaking evening study for honours degrees of London University. This demanded a gruelling routine of daytime administration and evening teaching during which Wilks's enthusiasm never waned. He was an exceptional teacher.

Generations of students benefited from his academic rigour, tinged as it was with a healthy dose of scepticism. Many, full of awe that they might not manage to attain the high standards he demanded of them, found that with his wise and generous advice they could indeed succeed. It was not only mature

students who were impressed by Wilks. When he met and talked to young undergraduates from the other colleges of London University taking the Special Subject Course on "The Pontificate of Innocent III", his keen and erudite mind provided the stimulation which younger students so much need and appreciate. The very large attendance at his farewell presentation at Birkbeck in the summer of 1992 bore witness to this exceptional gift as a teacher across the whole of his career.

He had much left to complete, particularly a biography of John Wyclif which had occupied his later years. Wilks, a modest and friendly man, had a multiplicity of talents and a mind singularly wise in his generation. In his teaching, writing and presentation to fellow academics, his intellectual capacity, coupled with an inborn humility, shone through most attractively.

Wilks was a founder member of the Ecclesiastical History Society, in which he served for many years as Treasurer and notably as its president in 1983. He was also Treasurer of the British National Commission of the Commission Internationale d'Histoire Ecclésiastique Comparée (CIHEC) and gave papers at CIHEC conferences held in the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Spain, and France. His interest in local history was reflected not only in his membership of the Carshalton Society, near his home in Croydon, Surrey, but in his several publications on the water, wind- and gunpowder mills of the Wandle Valley.

Brenda Bolton

Michael John Wilks, historian: born Bedford 13 August 1930; Lecturer, Birkbeck College, London 1957-67; Reader in the History of Political Thought 1967-74; Professor of Medieval History 1974-92 (Emeritus); married (two sons); died London 11 May 1998.

Hands off my allotment

The city dweller's hallowed patch of land is under threat from developers. But the city gardeners are not just townies with trowels and green wellies. They're fighting back. By Michael Leapman

There are 250,000 of us. We dress shabbily, get mucky in some of Britain's unloveliest urban landscapes and usually keep ourselves to ourselves. But as we enjoy the year's first succulent peas, lettuce, raspberries and new potatoes, a new spirit is sweeping over the nation's allotment holders. We have suddenly become a fashionable minority.

Allotment holders have been entitled for a long time, but until now nobody has noticed. Ever since World War Two, when allotment numbers peaked at 1.45 million, local councils and other authorities have been repossessing them. At last, our plight has come to the attention of the Commons select committee on the environment and is being aired in the media. This week, after months of wrangling, the committee noted that allotment sites were being sold to developers at an alarming rate, and urged the Government to frame new laws to halt the process.

"We believe the provision of allotments is a national issue," its report declared.

So it is; but we of the grubby fingernails and mud-caked boots have come to realise that New Labour, supposed friend of the downtrodden and advocate of honest toil, has no more sympathy for us than the rest of us. Since the Government took office last year, John Prescott's Environment Department has received scores of requests to close sites - and approved all of them.

Under the Allotment Acts of 1887 and 1908, local councils are obliged to provide plots where non-landowners can grow food - an early form of welfare for the virtuous poor. The sites can be closed only with Government approval, and even then the council has to offer alternatives.

Yet too often the dispossessed gardeners are offered a site too far from their homes to be practical. Or they require years of back-breaking work just to get the soil into a good enough condition.

It is ironic that Mr Prescott's department should act as our scourge, because his home town of Hull is a stronghold of the allotment movement. At the start of the decade, Richard Oster, who had an impeccable plot not far from the city centre, was twice named National Allotment Champion by the Royal Horticultural Society.

I remember going to see his halved space a few years back, sitting in a cosy wicker chair in the potting shed while he brewed me tea on his Aga stove and reminded me of the philosophy of the allotment gar-



Michael Leapman in his south London allotment, one of the community of grubby fingernails and mud-caked boots

Paul Armiger

dener: "Once we come through that gate we're all equal. If you're a bank manager or a pauper, nobody's better than anyone else." Surely a sentiment that Mr Prescott should share.

To non-believers, it is hard to explain the appeal of allotments. The tumbledown sheds, the broken fences, the flapping plastic bags tied to sticks to frighten off the pigeons - many find them an eyesore, and would be only too glad to get rid of them.

Yet, as LS Lowry taught us, there

can be beauty even in desolate industrial landscapes. Allotments are often the only green spaces for miles around and provide a haven for wildlife. On the plot in Brixton, south London, that I have dug for more than 20 fulfilling years, urban foxes romp among the cabbages.

More importantly for thousands of us, allotments are a way of life. We swap seedlings and shallots, praise our neighbours' parsnips, covet their carrots and share tales of woe about the vagaries of the weather.

Geoff Stokes, secretary of the na-

tional Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners, says: "They're communities. A lot of people on low incomes without transport don't have access to fresh food at reasonable prices."

Mind you, most of us are not in it to save money. When I added up some sums a few years ago, I found that nearly everything I grew cost me more than it would at Brixton market.

But that is not the point. The passions that our hobby can arouse were revealed last March in ITV's

Neighbours from Hell where a Yorkshire allotment holder set up a video camera to catch an ill-wisher doing unspeakable things to his courgettes. "You disgusting bastard rat," he muttered mildly.

Vandalism and theft are common complaints among allotment holders but I have seldom found them a problem, perhaps because my produce does not look good enough to steal or perhaps because it grows just outside the forbidding walls of Brixton prison. Occasionally, I find that local kids have been

playing football with my giant red cabbages, but the novelty soon wears off as they find more exciting things to do with their leisure.

The traditional image of an allotment holder is of a retired man spending his declining years toiling among the turnips - but the select committee says this is no longer a true picture. About a third of today's allotment holders are under 50, and many are women.

That was certainly not the case when I first acquired my allotment in the mid-Seventies. I was easily the

youngest on the site and my pensioner neighbours would try to wind me up: "We've seen your sort before. After a few weeks you'll find out how much hard work it is and we'll never see you again."

I persisted, just to show them, even going as far as to lend the plot to a friend when I went to live in America so that I would not lose my rights to my precious patch of land. Now I am old enough to patronise newcomers myself.

Our precious urban patches cost an average rent of £22 a year for a standard plot of ten rods, poles or perches - about 90ft by 30ft. No wonder 13,000 people all over the country are on waiting lists: and no wonder the authorities that own them feel they could be put to more profitable use.

I have just received the annual bill for my own allotment, half the standard size and owned by the local water company. It comes to £10.50 and I am saving hard.

Plots are being lost across the length and breadth of the land. At Easington in Durham (which has more allotments per head than any other English county), 61 sheds will go under the bulldozers in December. At Burwash in East Sussex, longtime home of the poet Rudyard Kipling, a productive site has been replaced by one on a cliff east-facing slope, accessible only by a narrow, overgrown path. As its most famous son almost wrote: "If you can keep your patch when all about you are losing theirs..."

A few enlightened councils have come down in favour of the green-fingered. In Stockport, the supermarket giant Tesco wanted to expand on to an allotment site and offered to build the gardeners sparkling new sheds, greenhouses and toilets on a virgin field a mile or so away.

Toilets? What nonsense! a crafty peer behind the blackberries is good enough for anyone. The tenants, entirely unimpressed, dug in their hoes and refused to hudge - so the council would not sell Tesco the land.

Says Geoff Stokes: "It isn't just a few old men in cloth caps who are going to fight it out to the bitter end. There's a lot of support out there. We've put it in people's minds what it is they're losing. There's a lot in the committee's report that should allow the movement to go forward."

I hope Mr Prescott will heed it. The seeds of protest have already been planted and the report could prove the fertilizer they need. Now we must hope for fair weather and the usual bit of luck.

PARK LIFE

BRUCE MILLAR



to perfection, shows how rare success has been for me in this area. More often the ball has landed yards behind my opponent's baseline, sometimes taking off in a great arc to clear the high wire fence at the back of the court.

Beyond the knowledge that we shared the humiliation of the failed backhand, Rusedski's admission has reminded me of something that I had forgotten: despite its strawberries-and-cream, tea-party-at-the-vicarage image, tennis is a fiendishly difficult game.

Hitting a fast-moving ball hard and high enough to clear the net, but not so hard and high that it lands out, is no easy matter, even for a highly trained professional. No wonder I struggled to get a decent game with the boys.

But I have made an accidental discovery that may revolutionise the way we play tennis in my family. During the annual mini-boom that accompanies Wimbledon and collapses three weeks later, it is impossible to get a court at our local park.

So, this week we played at the side of the cricket pitch; no net, no markings, just a wide expanse of grass. And it was

wonderful; we enjoyed rally after free-form rally with no sign of Nastase or McEnroe. Next month, when everyone has drifted away on holiday and the courts are empty once again, if I have my way, we'll still be playing on the cricket pitch. If Greg Rusedski has any more trouble with that pesky top-spin backhand, he's welcome to join us.

wonder: did McEnroe grow up with an older brother who was always trying to put him in his place?

If I had been a bit quicker when we arrived at the court, I would have bagged the first name. It was Greg Rusedski who, a couple of months ago, presented me with my "Tennis Moment of the Year". The top-ranked Brit, the world number four, admitted in a newspaper article that he had lost a crucial match because he could not do a top-spin backhand. Couldn't do it?

It worked well enough in practice, he explained, but under pressure, when he really needed to win the point, the shot had deserted him.

My heart soared. Thanks Greg, the first Briton (by birth or adoption) to be a genuine contender for a grand slam title in my lifetime, and he admits his inability to perform one of the basic strokes of tennis. Imagine Alan Shearer saying he can't pass the ball; Tiger Woods saying he's not good with a five iron; Nigel Mansell saying he can't change gear. My mind scrolled back over 30 years of attempting the top-spin backhand, usually with humiliating results; the fact that I could recall one particular shot, executed

Mensa fails the sexism test

The society for big brains has just ousted its first female chairperson. Does it have enough basic common sense to thrive in the egalitarian Nineties? By Darius Sanai

EVERY DAY in the heart of England an elite, male-dominated clique plots its next move in an unending quest for glory. The intelligent men in charge have worked for years to climb to their positions, and the media attention is welcome fuel for their actions.

A woman headed their institution, briefly, a strong and popular woman. This week she was ousted, and now the grey men have taken over again.

This particular clique is not Her Majesty's Government but Mensa, the society for the country's brainiest citizens - and its internal plottings, which resulted earlier this week in a popular chairman being ousted, would put even the Tory Party to shame.

Mensa has been riddled with infighting since it was founded, but recently it has been struggling to recruit members, shake off its dorky image and find someone to transform it from a loose organisation whose members have nothing in common except a high IQ, to something more substantial.

Julie Baxter, a sociable 45-year-old from Lancashire with an IQ of 154, was supposed to change everything. She was appointed to be the society's first female chair in October last year, and said she was keen to expand membership, modernise Mensa's image and improve its services to members. Mensa chairs had previously been feted for their squareness. Even Sir Clive Sinclair is remembered for his ludicrous C5 road buggy. Now here was a woman whose "dyed blonde hair and tight-fitting jodhpurs" were the talk of the tabloids.

Though his appeal to an industrial tribunal was suc-

cessful, Gale never got over the depression generated by the publicity. In 1997 he drove his car into a railway bridge support arch. Though the official verdict was accidental death, those close to him believe he took his own life.

After Gale's departure, Sir Clive, who was still chairman, appointed another non-Mensa businessman, Dave Chatthen, to the post. Chatthen had numerous run-ins with the committee, and eventually circulated a crude newsletter containing damaging information about two of its members. At the beginning of this year he was finally forced to resign; but as he did so he circulated a letter suggesting that Baxter had been a "driving force" behind the derogatory newsletter.

It was largely on this implication that she was speared last week. Julie Baxter says she plans to fight back. Articulate and thoughtful, she is the kind of person who leaves you trailing mentally. She is convinced that two allied forces ousted her from the job: sexism and power play from the male members of the committee.

She is withering in her analysis. "These are people who can behave in the most dastardly way, and then justify it to themselves. They have no life except Mensa, and they don't want to do anything for Mensa, they are just sad people... It's psychologically unhealthy; most of them can't have relationships or even hold proper jobs."

In contrast, Mensa's new

chairwoman, Noel Burger, says

Baxter was ousted not

because she was a modernising

woman, but because "she

never listened to anything any-

one else says".

"It amazes me she's taking this angle", he adds. "She accuses us of playing politics, but she was the most political member of the committee."

On one level it's all just another chapter in the potholed story of Britain's brainiest people. But at the heart of the issue is something more fundamental. In the US, Mensa is much cooler than it is over here; those who join it boast proudly of their achievements. In this country, though, ostentatious shows of intelligence are frowned on as surely as shows of wealth. Just as the aristocracy once used to posture around in old tweed jackets, so the super-smart restrict themselves to making tacit comments to each other in London's clubland.

The point of Mensa's existence here is twofold: as the butt of anorak-ridden jokes from the press, making fun of the fact that Britain's "most intelligent" people are impractical, uncool and in fact dumber than the rest of us; and secondly as a comforter to people who feel excluded from society, to prove to themselves that they are superior.

There are exceptions to this generalisation, but their actions speak for themselves: Carol Vorderman now declines to have anything to do with the society's publicity, and the new, super-glam face of Mensa, the teenage model Hayley Abdulla, resigned from the committee last week.

Julie Baxter may vow to fight back against the plotters of the Wolverhampton putsch, but she'll be fighting against the organisation's very *raison d'être*.

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Kandla Port in Gujarat, western India shortly after it was devastated by a cyclone which claimed around 2500 victims

كذا من الأصل

After the disaster, a deadly silence fell

When a cyclone warning was picked up in Kandla port, no one thought to tell the salt pan workers.

After the disaster, the survivors are battling against an uncaring bureaucracy. By Peter Popham

PRADIP CHOWDHURY, the man beside me in the front row of the small Indian Airlines plane, had every reason to look serious. The factory in Calcutta where he is the purchasing manager makes acrylic fibre. Like every other such factory in the world, it depends on a steady supply of acrylonitrile, a fearsome substance closely related to cyanide, with a flashpoint of 0°C.

So hazardous is acrylonitrile that the Indian government allows it to come in through only one port, Kandla in Gujarat, the busiest and most modern port in India.

Kandla is unfortunately a 12-day truck ride from Calcutta, but it is the only major Indian port that is not in or close to a large city. So if Pradip Chowdhury's acrylonitrile were suddenly to go boom one day, it would be a mess, but it would not be a Bhopal-sized disaster, the sort of thing to freeze the cornflakes half-way to your lips.

It would be what the Indians like to call a "misshap", perhaps on the scale of the "Nepal bus misshap" featured in Tuesday's *Times of India*, in which at least 36 people died when their bus plunged into a river west of Kathmandu.

Pradip's acrylonitrile has not gone boom, but it is stuck on a large ship anchored off the Gujarat coast. If the ship is not berthed and the cargo unloaded soon, his factory will stop functioning. But his ship cannot get anywhere close to the port, because Kandla itself has been torn to pieces.

The port stood square in the path of a cyclone that arrived from the Arabian Sea midway through the morning of Tuesday 9 June. There were warnings of a storm; the previous day at 4.40pm the Meteorological Department had suddenly upped the category of warning from signal No 4 to signal No 8, signifying great danger. "The port will experience severe weather from a storm of great intensity that is expected to cross the south of the port."

When they received this message, the Kandla Port Trust (KPT) hurried themselves into action. The chairman of the port's trustees, Captain A.N.M. Kishore, is jealous of Kandla's reputation: last year it handled 40 million tons of cargo, 4 million more tons than its closest rival. The message was passed to shipping agents, port users and ships' cargo operations in the port were stopped and signals were raised.

But the KPT's zeal to protect

its domain and its people was not matched by the state authority, which has jurisdiction outside the port's gates. As well as being a port, Kandla is home to the biggest expanse of salt pans in Asia. Flat as a table, cut into rectangles with low ridges in between, they stretch for 45km, to the horizon and beyond, occupying 220,000 acres of land. Every high tide, sea water pours across this vast expanse and is trapped in the inner salt pans; then the hot sun vaporises the water, and before the next tide can arrive the salt is scraped off with picks and shovels and carted off to be treated with iodine, then packed and shipped.

Working in the salt pans must have a fair claim to being the worst job in the world. A pathetic Gujarati women's folk song has lyrics along the lines of, "Oh Mother, why did you have to marry me to a salt worker? He's too stupid to try anything else."

The desperation of utter poverty goads thousands of men into working here, padding in rhyme that destroys their skin, sweating under the fierce summer sun, amassing salt for which they receive 140 rupees per ton - a little over £2 for perhaps three days' work. The brine can cause gangrene, then their limbs have to be amputated and they can no longer work - so their wives and children must take their place if they are to survive.

Desperately poor men, often accompanied by their families, trek hundreds of miles to work in Gujarat's salt pans, from as far away as Orissa, Bihar and Kerala. They arrive in the most primitive workplace imaginable. Their new employer takes no account of them. Their names are unrecorded. No one knows how many people are employed. They have no security or support. They live crammed together in tiny shacks made of breeze blocks and bits of wood on the edge of the salt pans, with no sanitation or even any drinking water.

Here they are, side by side: the aspirational new India of Kandla port, with its mighty cranes, acres of containers, "emporiums" for visiting seafarers, with signs in Greek and Russian. And then there is the India where the poor are routinely treated by their employers worse than animals.

And distinctly worse than animals in one particular respect. A flock of goats, a herd of water buffaloes, are counted, watched over, looked after. The salt-pan

workers of Kandla, by contrast - employees of the Kutch salt works - are considered to be completely dispensable.

So on the evening of 8 June, as the officers of Kandla port trust trusted themselves battening down the hatches in advance of the forecast "storm of great intensity", the workers in Kandla's salt pans carried on oblivious. No one told them anything. No sirens were sounded. No signs were raised. Their employers had every reason to be as well informed as the port authority. But if they were, they made no

everybody who lived to tell the tale. Rushing across the wastes towards them was a 30-ft-high wall of water. It engulfed them, smashed everything and killed everyone in its path, then came back and did it some more. When it had finished, the salt works had been destroyed and the salt pans were empty of life.

By 4.30pm the tidal wave was gone and the winds, 150kph or even more at the peak, had moderated. Of the 1,000 odd people - 15 more were added to the list on Tuesday - whose corpses have now been counted, just five were employees of

A nation's genius, as well as everybody who lived to tell the tale, was apparent at times of great crisis. India has a genius for improvising in the most unpromising circumstances. You can see this today in Kandla port.

The damage done by the cyclone is stupendous. I was taken around the port by one of the port's guards, D G Gracia, who was present when the cyclone hit. "I was on duty by the go-downs when the water flooded in up to my chest," he said. "So I rushed to the front gate and climbed up onto the roof of the office, to save my life. From there I saw the big ships that had been moored to the jetties being dragged round and round then flushed out of the channel. I felt sure that everything was going to be destroyed, myself and the whole port, completely. I was the only survivor."

They showed me how they achieved the feat. Inside the office, at a corner of the wall, there is a safe. Two stood on that to avoid the wave's brunt. Someone tied an old sari on to a roof beam, and the rest hauled themselves by the sari up into the rafters. They clung there like monkeys until it passed.

All these men are multiply bereaved. You don't know what to say to them. But they in turn don't express much grief. "Are you sorry about losing your wife and family?" the photographer asked one of them, Ramji Hassan. "Yes, of course," he replied, "but everyone else is in the same situation. It's nothing special now."

Ramji lost seven members of his immediate family: wife, son, three sisters, brother, nephew. Apart from himself, only his father survived - he was down the road in Gandhamati. Eight more members of his extended family died as well. He showed where they had all lived, now just a jumble of toppled blocks, broken roof tiles, tatters of clothing, cooking pots, empty soda bottles, a rusting treadle sewing-machine.

Ramji speaks bitterly of the salt company boss. "He hasn't provided even one rupee to help us. He hasn't even visited the place. When some of us went to his office, he wouldn't see us. On the morning of the storm, I asked him to lend us a vehicle so we could move our families out of danger. He refused. He said, if you want to leave, walk."

Soon after the storm, the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpeyi, promised relatives of victims 50,000 rupees (about £750) in compensation, for a maximum of two relatives. Ramji has submitted the paperwork. What will he do with the money? "I will give it to some temple or mosque," he says. And what is he going to do himself, how will he live? He makes a gesture. "I have two hands."



Storm damage in Kandla port (top); Mamji Hassan (above) in front of the ruins Pappu Soneji

use of the information. The brutal routine of the salt pans went on as normal.

In fact, it went on more intensely than normal. The fortnight before the monsoon is the most productive period in the salt pans' year: the sun beats down at temperatures of 45 degrees or even higher, so the rate of evaporation is faster. The nameless, unnumbered workers, paid by the ton, went at it like madmen. The wind had already got up, and it strengthened steadily through the following morning. Still they worked on. Then shortly after midday, some of them must have glanced up from their work. What they saw terrified

them. The salt pans, by contrast, stretching to the horizon, seem bald and abandoned as if human beings had never set foot in them. But when we drove up to what little remains of the Kutch salt company, we found signs of life. The company

THE JURY is still out on whether Britain is booming, but most of the country, at the moment, seems to be sleeping. Pages, mobile phones, personal organisers, microwaves, car alarms, and coming soon to a train near you, Clive Wellington's "personal destination indicator".

By day, Clive's a self-employed double-glazing window-fitter from Essex. By night, he's a visionary inventor driven by the desire to awaken his fellow countrymen from their apathy, to arouse them from their slumber. Especially if they happen to be travelling on the 18.48 from Liverpool Street to Clacton. "This time, next year," he keeps promising his young partner, Brett, "we'll be millions".

As Brett and I board the 18.48 - 20 minutes late due to a broken-down train in Chelmsford - we joke about inventing a sleeping device that could alert commuters to delays. If anyone can do it, we agree, Clive can. "Wolly's very charismatic," Brett purrs. "Always coming up with ideas."

The interest in the *Sleepy Sleeper* vindicates his instinct. Journalists are beating a path to his door. Tomorrow's *World* is interested, the DTI have given him financial backing and - the ultimate accolade surely - he is being followed around by a fly-on-the-wall documentary team.

Being a docu-soap star has great spin-off potential, which is why Clive is seeking a shirt sponsorship deal *a la* Shearer and Beckham. "That Maureen, the learner driver on the telly, made 50 grand last year. People can relate to her."

People can also relate to Clive. His invention might not appeal to the Martins-from-Braintree but he seems destined to become as famous as Maureen from *Driving School* and Jeremy from *Airport*.

"I'm talking to the right people now," he sighs. "Eight years ago, when the idea came to me, I wasn't. And people with great ideas, like me, weren't getting any support going any further." The Del Boy of *Bleep Britannia* winks at his partner Brett. "This time it's different, ain't it, geezer. This time we're going all the way. All the way, mate."

ANTHONY CLAVANE

WIN A VIP DAY OUT AT WIMBLEDON FOR LADIES QUARTER FINAL DAY

The Independent and Robinsons, the Official Soft Drink of Wimbledon, are offering readers the opportunity to attend this year's Wimbledon by giving you the chance to win a set of four exclusive hospitality tickets.

Robinsons drinks have been served at Wimbledon since 1934 and you can enjoy the hospitality of a company whose name has become synonymous with this prestigious tournament.

The winner and three friends or family members will enjoy a great day of Centre Court action on Tuesday 30th June, with full VIP hospitality. Throughout the day you will be treated to a champagne reception, four course silver service lunch, afternoon tea and a complimentary bar.

This promotion is officially endorsed by The All England Tennis Club.

To enter the competition just dial the number below, answer the following question leaving your name, address and telephone number:

Q2 - Which female tennis player has won the most Wimbledon titles?

- a) Billy Jean King
- b) Martina Navratilova
- c) Margaret Court

N.B. In the event that the tennis is rescheduled these tickets are valid for Tuesday 30th June only.

Call 0930 564652

ROBINSONS

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A knife at the opera

The grand old farce of Royal Opera House management becomes more improbable by the hour. On Tuesday, Sir Richard Eyre delivers his state-of-the-capital report. But is it too late to save Covent Garden from itself? By David Lister

Last Monday morning at 8.30 sharp the new head of opera education arrived at the Royal Opera House. An hour later she was on her way home. The management had decided they didn't need a new head of education. A pay-off was hastily arranged. It was the first redundancy, the first example of mad management and the first waste of public money of the week. And it wasn't yet 10 o'clock: once again, the knives were out.

The roller coaster catalogue of royal Opera House blunders continues at such a frenetic pace that one escaped public view. It's far from the only matter of public concern that even obsessive opera house watchers have failed to comment on. Take another example: the advertising of appointments – it is an area crucial to the concern the Eyre report, Sir Richard Eyre's scrutiny of opera in London which will be published next Tuesday which will change forever the way opera and ballet are presented in the capital.

The Eyre Report was commissioned by the Government, and a Commons Select Committee inquiry was launched following disturbing incidents at the ROH last year. These centred on the appointment as chief executive of Mary Allen, who was brought over from the Arts Council without the st being advertised.

That was one lesson you'd have taught the Royal Opera House if you'd have learnt. Surely the outcry over that appointment would have taught them that senior posts in the greatest publicly-funded arts institution in the country should be openly advertised, and a fair and open interview process should be place.

To which one might retort in less an lyrical terms, "Oh yeah!" The present chief executive is Pelham Len, brought in from the accounts Coopers and Lybrand. The artistic director, the man in overall charge of all Royal Opera and Royal Ballet policy, is Richard Jarman, late Scottish Opera. Both men are re-elected. But in neither case was the st advertised. In neither case is there any regard shown for any of equal opportunities policy. The ROH replies that both appointments are temporary, yet the contracts are for two years, which these days constitutes a long-term job.

But let's be fair: They might not be quite that long. The ROH chairman Sir Colin Southgate now says he will close the House down if the OH's £15m-a-year grant is not renewed. That, he claims, is necessary to avoid trading insolvently. Iris Smith, the Culture Secretary, said to be furious at Sir Colin's authority, though it was Smith who appointed this hotshot businessman as chairman of ENO to sort out the mess. Sir Colin is said to have been horrified by what he saw when he opened the books. Hence his decision. And aren't hotshot business men supposed to ask about the figures and look at the books before they take on the job? Did no one work out the cost of re-opening before £78m of public money then moved into the £214m project?

Sir Colin's ultimatum brought a

quick response from the influential select committee chairman Gerald Kaufman MP. He called for the Royal Opera House to be privatised. Could this be the same Gerald Kaufman MP, chairman of the select committee, who stated in the committee's report on the Royal Opera House last autumn that privatisation "under present United Kingdom tax law, which does not offer incentive to donors, is inherently impractical"?

Headline writers have often compared the Byzantine insipidity at the ROH in recent years to tragic opera (though significantly none of those in overall charge has had an opera background). But tragic opera is the wrong comparison. Gerald Kaufman has forced the departure of a chairman, a chief executive and an entire board. Who else is he but the lord high executioner? The former

entertainment in an institution already funded by the taxpayer is, to most ordinary people, not just decadent but obscene.

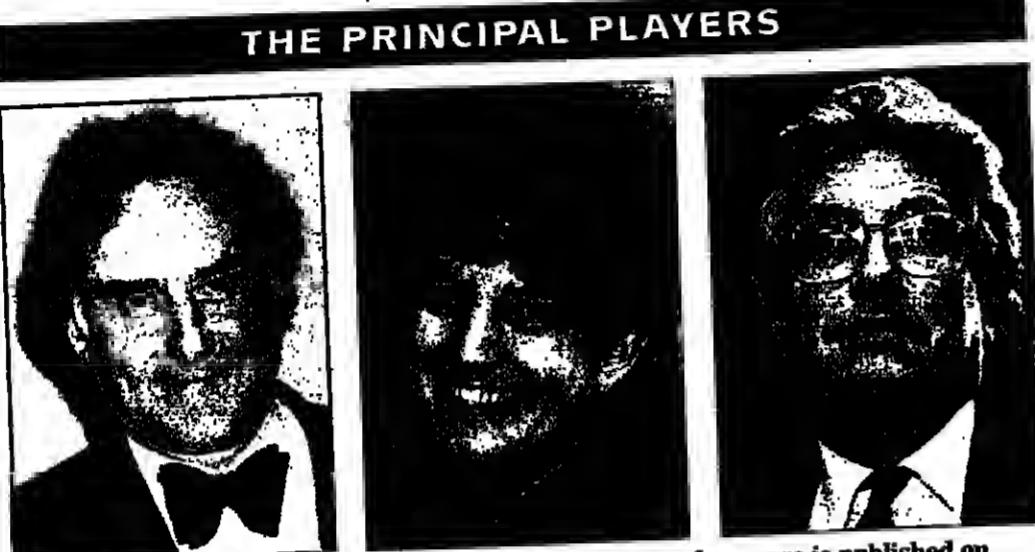
Ah, says the new Covent Garden management, we agree there has been a terrible mess, but we are sorting it out. But at what cost? How much money is being spent on consultants? Coopers and Lybrand and personally clashes have shown the fact that the ROH should not really be about Coopers and Lybrand, Chris Smith or Sir Richard Eyre at all. It should be about Plácido Domingo, Sir Bernard Haitink, Dame Birgitte Nilsson and Sylvie Guillem. Ballet director Sir Anthony Dowell and opera chief Nicholas Payne never got a fraction of the column inches that Mary Allen or Lord Chadlington received. Somewhere along this crazy roller coaster of politics and money, the art got lost.

isation and an end to outdated practices."

Gubay believes the House should be privatised. Sir Richard is highly unlikely to recommend that. But it would not be surprising to see some of Gubay's other suggestions in his report.

Of course there is another route altogether. Sir Peter Hall, who knows the subsidised arts better than anyone, points out that the House still gets less subsidy than any comparable European opera house. "Why just say whether it wants the arts or not," he says. "If it does, then fund them properly. And if it doesn't, then let's close them down."

It is true, and all too rarely stated, that paying off the debts not just of the Royal Opera House but of every publicly funded arts institution in this country would not cost more than about £50m – not even a blip on the Treasury graph. That the Treasury and sections of the electorate with such suspicion that they would be alarmed by such a gesture has much to do with the way Covent Garden has run its affairs. It has turned the public against financing the arts properly. That's not Gilbert and Sullivan. That's tragic.



Sir Richard Eyre (left), whose report into the state of London opera is published on Tuesday; Mary Allen, who moved from the Arts Council to become the ROH's chief executive; the ROH's chairman, Sir Colin Southgate. Main photograph: William Webster

chairman, Lord Chadlington, who compared his little local difficulty to the Falklands War, was the very model of a modern major general.

The House's tales of comic incompetence, vanity and the British class system at work are straight out of the operas that (perhaps because their subject matter is too close to home) are never performed there: Gilbert and Sullivan.

But could WS Gilbert have made up a fraction of the events and characters of the past two years? Could he have invented the patrician Arts Council chairman Lord Gowrie, who denounced Covent Garden's closure arrangements as a "shambles", neglecting to add that he was supposed to have been authorising and monitoring that shambles? WS could have had fun with Sir Jeremy Isaacs, the ROH general director who stood down a year early railing against inadequate subsidy but took his £120,000 salary for a year after quit.

Even Sir Jeremy's dignified and likeable successor Genista Mclintoch, who resigned after five months, added a Gilbertian richness to the drama when she told the select committee she had left because the place was likely to make her ill. WS would have had no difficulty at all with Mary Allen and Lord Chadlington, who were both at the Arts Council to award Covent Garden £78m of lottery money then moved across to help spend it.

that this champion of publicly funded arts would not make a plea for better funding, then he was being very naive.

But if Sir Colin Southgate believes the Eyre report will support uncritically the Covent Garden demand for more money (or that the Treasury would seriously countenance doubling the grant) then he too is being naive. Next Tuesday Sir Richard will, I believe, call in the strongest terms for Covent Garden to put its House in order; he will demand cheaper seats and wider access; and he will call for closer links with the commercial sector.

Therein lies the most serious accusation to be made against the succession of managements that have dragged the Royal Opera House down in public perception into the realms of farce: they have, by association, degraded their artists.

By putting on the ballet at ludicrously unsuitable venues, they made it look as though there is not an audience for their dancers. By charging up to £250 for opera they have brought that art form into disrepute with the public at large. One has only to be on a radio phone-in on arts funding, as I was this week, to marvel at the sneers that any mention of opera attracts.

But it is no marvel really. The argument that there are seats in the gods for under a tenner to balance the £200-plus tickets, misses a vital point. The very concept of charging more than £200 for an evening's

theatre is nonsense. It needs a more radical approach. They should allow the House to take advantage of its prime London position and have commercial companies performing there. The Royal Opera should stage popular operas for week-long periods, not always have to alternate them with other productions and with the ballet. The ballet should have its own seasons at Christmas and in the summer, when there is huge demand. The orchestra should be combined with one of the London orchestras.

There is huge scope for rational-



CLASSIC CARTOONS

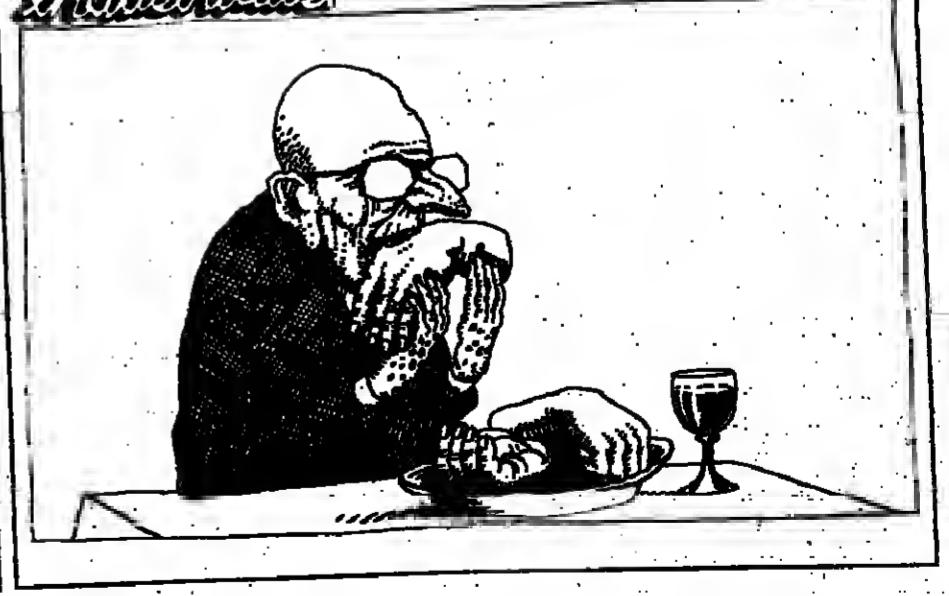
MARTIN PLIMMER ON HELEN E HOKINSON AND B KLIBAN



THE GAG-SHY cartoon demands some courage on the part of the artist, though it required less in Helen E. Hokinson's day, when the picture itself was just as important as the idea.

Hokinson, who started out drawing fashion illustrations for

Industrialist



department stores, swapped form for folly in 1925, when her enchanting depictions of plump, affluent ladies in hats began appearing in *The New Yorker*.

Fifty years later, B. Kliban was working in an era when cartoon publishers were capitulating to

the ethos of rapid gratification. Quick and simple line drawings predominated, sacrificing decoration for gags.

Though his style is much sparser than Hokinson's, Kliban was just as much a talented draughtsman, and his less-than-

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Strictly classroom

David Benedict applauds the latest adaptation of 'The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie', but sees a production living in the shadow of its free-spirited protagonist

"GIVE ME a girl at an impressionable age, and she's mine for life." As views of the education process go, it's pretty selfish. But then not every teacher is Jean Brodie, and you only have to watch one of the St Trinian's films to know that there is more to girls' schools than Enid Blyton.

The National Theatre had done its bit for the genre, staging Sarah Daniels' Neoprene, Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour* and now turning its attention to *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*.

Jay Presson Allen turned her own doggedly faithful stage adaptation into a film but neither version could hold a candle to Muriel Spark's matchlessly spry novel about a dangerously influential teacher in the Edinburgh of the Thirties who manipulates her girls for her own needs. The play has, nonetheless, done decent service - revived in the West End just four years ago - but for Phyllida Lloyd's extraordinary new production, Allen has substantially revised it. The results of their collaboration are truly remarkable.

The prosaic framing device of a reporter inviting Sister Helena to talk about her schooldays has been scrapped. Better still, Allen and Lloyd have re-thought everything, cutting over-explanatory dialogue

and entire scenes. Lloyd has also done away with naturalism. She and the Humbley Muir design team adopt bold colours and visual metaphors. Vast wall frames of school climbing bars double as the grille through which Sister Helena (former Brodie schoolgirl Sandy) speaks, vividly conjuring the cloistered atmosphere of school and nunery. She also pulls off a master stroke by using children to create all the choral and string music which suffuses the production.

But, and it is a big but, it is not just the schoolgirls who are in thrall to their leader: the production itself is, too. From the second Fiona Shaw swaggers on, hand on hip, it is clear she is taking the high-spirited route.

Teddy (the excellent Nicholas Le Prevost), the art master who loves her, describes her as "the only sex-bestressed object in this stony pile", and he is right. This Miss Brodie toys with everyone and trumpets her delusions from the rooftops. As a comic turn it is ludicrously enjoyable, but it is impossible to believe that this free-spirited woman has been teaching at such a traditional school for more than five minutes. For all her talk, we need to see her deeply conservative streak, or else her Fascism makes no sense.

Shaw's boisterousness infects nearly all the performances, and not all the relationships ring true because of the high mannerism. The scenes between the girls are often very funny, but sometimes you feel as if you are watching cut-takes from *Daisy Pulls It Off*. In the midst of all this, Susannah Wise is very impressive as Miss Brodie's brooding, duplicitous confidante Sandy. Her increasing disengagement and maturity give the proceedings some much needed weight.

As Oscar Wilde wrote, "each man kills the thing he loves... the coward does it with a kiss". This is precisely what Lloyd has the tearful, tormented Sandy/Sister Helena do at the moment of her betrayal, an action thrillingly prefigured in the opening tableau where the nuns seated all along a table are suddenly transformed into the Brodie girls, and then in a flash into the figures of *The Last Supper*.

Moments like these cast a tremendous spell. A shame that, in this of all plays, the truth is so compromised by the wilfulness of the central performance.

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, at the Royal National Theatre, Lyttleton, South Bank, London SE1. Box office 0171-452 3000



A high-spirited Miss Brodie (Fiona Shaw) with Teddy (Nicholas Le Prevost) Kirsten Reynolds

Too many notes, Mr King, too many notes

A GERMAN music college has a course for composers on stage deportment - thanking conductors and principal performers, acknowledging applause without hogging it, getting off the stage before the clapping stops. All useful stuff; but a course on how or how not to write programme notes might be even more useful.

This year's Spitalfields Festival provided three cautionary examples. Introducing his cantata *Gethsemane* (3 June), Matthew King spent half a paragraph sneering at critics (possibly justified, but hardly good politics), and then told us that, "Unusually, for a composer of

CLASSICAL

MATTHEW KING, GILES SWAYNE, PIERS HELLAWELL, SPITALFIELDS FESTIVAL, LONDON

Biblical pieces, Matthew King believes in God". Does he know something about Arvo Part, John Tavener or James MacMillan that I don't? - to say nothing of Byrd, Bach, Haydn, Beethoven, Franck, Bruckner, Poulenc, Stravinsky. Remarks like that don't put the informed listener in the most friendly and receptive state of mind.

Giles Swayne ended the note for

his *Miss Tiburtina* (22 June) with an equally arresting statement: "While listening to it, it is worth reflecting that in the course of its 20 minutes, 600 children will have died, directly or indirectly, of starvation". A terrible thought, and worth remembering at any time. But how is that supposed to affect the way we listen? What we heard was an arresting piece of choral music, written with all Swayne's imagination and skill, and superbly performed by the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge under Timothy Brown. Stylistically it seemed rather pot-pouri-like at first, but the concluding *Sicut erat*, *Benedictus* and *Agnus*

Dei movements had an impressive simplicity and single-mindedness. But the more absorbing the music became, the less inclined I felt to think about the problem of World Starvation. Were my ears tuned to these ears?

Swayne's next piece, *The Silent Land*, was written, we were told, in memory of the husband of a friend. "The cello is the dead person's soul; the semichorus is the bereaved family; the other parts are the grieving community". All right, you callous critic, criticize that if you dare! All I can say - with some trepidation - is that it reminded me of Janacek's remark that great emotion doesn't

always mean great music. The long cello solo (performed by the excellent Raphael Wallisch), set against slowly chanted lines from the chorus, "requiescant in pace" (may they rest in peace), had the manner of a big emotional outpouring, but to these ears it seemed almost intemperate - especially so after the first part, an effective and affecting setting of Christina Rosetti's poem *When I am dead, my dearest*.

Piers Hellawell spent a good part of the note for his *The Building of Curves* pondering the solving of the famous Fermat's Last Theorem. "However", he added, "it is not important to know this!" Too right. All

STEPHEN JOHNSON

ARTS DIARY

DAVID LISTER

IF ALASTAIR Campbell should tire of 10 Downing Street, a job awaits him in the high arts. Both the National Gallery and the British Museum have decided to appoint spin doctors, reporting to the respective directors Neil MacGregor and Robert Anderson. Those of us who did not appreciate that a more positive gloss needs to be put on Caravaggio, and had not seen the need for art critics to be given three bottles of claret before they saw the case for the Elgin Marbles remaining in Britain, are out of touch with the realpolitik. The new spin doctors will be required to forge links with ministers and backbench MPs; and I hear that the Culture Department has been encouraging the two national flagships to have

I ANTICIPATED in this column last week that Royal Ballet dancer Deborah Bull (left) was courting trouble with her first remarks as a new member of the Arts Council. Fresh-faced youth, she said, was replacing "old men in suits". Trouble soon followed - and from an embarrassing quarter for Miss Bull. Her attacker, no old man in a suit she, is the elegant and much admired Lady MacMillan, former Arts Council member, former head of the Council's dance panel, a board member of the Royal Ballet and widow of Kenneth MacMillan, the Royal Ballet's celebrated choreographer. "Her entire career with the Royal Ballet," says Deborah MacMillan of Ms Bull, "has been supported by these 'old men'... her comment can only give cause for concern about the quality of debate to come." As the two Deborahs must meet

very regularly, the quality of debate between the two of them, at least, should be pretty lively.

CHATTING TO Sir Peter Hall about the decline in arts funding and the low esteem the Government seems to have for the arts, I am told by the venerable director that some blame for the lack of funding rests with us critics. "Why are people who question the financing of theatres whingeing luvvies?" he asks. Actually, I partly agree. The continual use of the word "luvvie" in the papers is demeaning to artists, and cheapens the funding debate.

LANGUAGE IS a powerful catalyst in affecting public opinion towards the arts. Last Wednesday night I was part of a panel discussing arts funding in a 90-minute programme on Radio 5. Listeners who called in were nearly all scornful of the idea that the arts should receive any more money. It's ironic that the lobby which should be the most articulate in the country has failed to get its message across. But we were able to bring happiness to an art lover from Wales, who said she yearned to go to the opera but could not afford £100 for a seat. When we told her that she could in fact go to the Welsh National Opera for a few pounds, her delight was a joy to hear.

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

POOR	★ ★ ★ ★
	★ ★ ★ ★
	★ ★ ★ ★
EXCELLENT	★★★★★

OVERVIEW

CRITICAL VIEW

ON VIEW

OUR VIEW

THE PLAY

HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE

Paula Vogel's Pulitzer prize-winning drama examines the incestuous relationship between a teenage girl and her married uncle, with Kevin Whately in the driving seat.

David Benedict noted "the thinness of the writing and some poor American accents", lamenting the presence of "a clearly imposed judgemental line which stifles the true dramatic richness". The *Evening Standard* was appalled by the "disconcertingly flippant, not to say mocking, attitude to Sixties, backwoods Mary," though it conceded that "this ghastly version of the sex war fascinates". "A serious, complex experience," decreed an even-handed *Financial Times*, praising Whately for his "tremendous innocence", while the *Daily Mail* poetically dubbed it "a powerful light on a dark corner".

An effort to dilute and de-fang the image of homosexuality for nervous, straight audiences," said an irritated Ryan Gilbey, who found Aniston "a jolly enough actress even if there really is no beginning to her talents". Always in tune with the best parties, the *Daily Mail* designated it "a good choice for a girls' night out", though *The Guardian* would rather "watch it on TV with cereal on a Sunday night", writing off the plot as "pointless sap". The *Times* warned that "does may curl" though felt more charitable towards Aniston, finding her "never less than pleasant".

On general release, cert 15. 111 minutes.

The Beastie Boys will be appearing at T in the Park, Balado, Fife on July 12 and at the Reading Festival, Nr Rivermead Leisure Centre, Reading on 29 August.

Kevin Whately, better known as the nice Sergeant Lewis from *Inspector Morse*, just isn't mean enough. A brave foray into a sensitive subject, but *Lolita* it ain't.

★★★★★

THE FILM

THE OBJECT OF MY AFFECTION

A pregnant social worker, played by Jennifer Aniston, falls in love with a sensitive teacher who has the audacity to be gay, in this unofficial sequel to *My Best Friend's Wedding*.

Fiona Sturges felt their "trademark hokey, shouty vocals" to be "something of an acquired taste," adding that "thirteen years on, they are still a force to be reckoned with, having lost any of their juvenile sparkle".

"Party tunes for bodyslipping beat boys and beat girls' raps the *Financial Times*, appropriating the Beastie's delinquent dialect. "I think I must be missing the point," bleats the *Daily Telegraph*, calling the show "an uncontrollable explosion of hysterical, top-heavy noise, lacking contrast, chutzpah, guile and depth".

Even in their maturer years, these bastions of teenage misdemeanour will either exhilarate or exhaust, but never bore.

★★★★★

THE WEEK ON RADIO

REVIEWED BY ROBERT HANKS

WE ALL do stupid things from time to time, but what's important is having the courage to stand up and say when you were wrong. So, I admit, when Radio 4 changed its schedule, I said I thought it was quite good. Are you satisfied? Does it give you a thrill to see me humiliated in this way?

To be honest, the true awfulness didn't really sink in until the daily nightmare of *Postcards*, which has been shaping up nicely as a contender for most ill-conceived drama ever broadcast, gave way to the stunningly dreary *Under One Roof*. There's no hyperbole here: some episodes have left me genuinely stunned, stumbling around in a kind of aesthetic concussion.

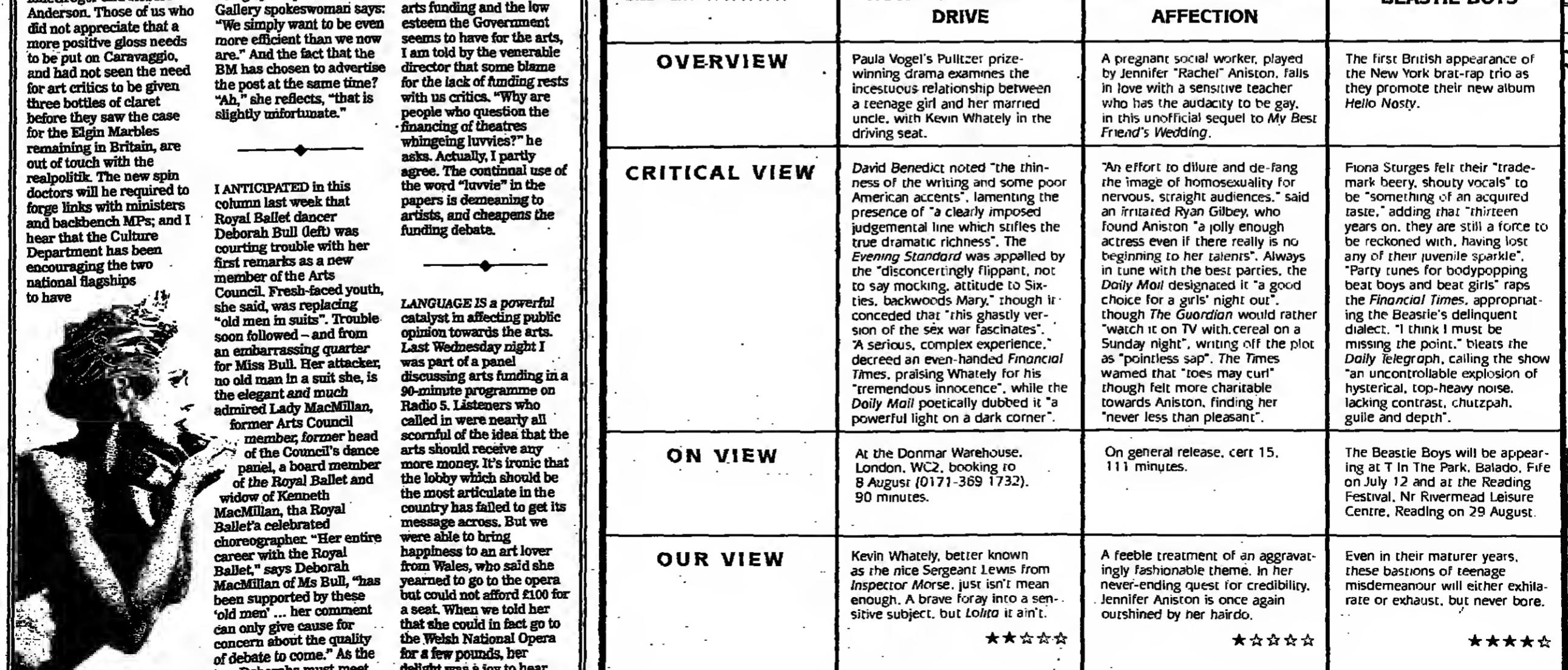
Under One Roof clearly regards itself as a hard-hitting social-issue drama - hence the casual use of words such as "vagina" - the issue in this case being the awfulness of living with your ageing, crotchety mother. The issue is real enough, but the banality of the script - Mum resists the old people's day centre, but when she does go she can stop talking about what a lovely time she had - reduces it to Toytown inconsequentiality.

It doesn't help that the actors seem to be talking through clenched teeth, as though desperately trying to sound as if it's all nothing to do with them. That's the worst of it, but the coffin hasn't been short of nails. Take *Puzzle Panel*, a new brain-twisting slot at Thursday lunchtime. I'm not sure which is the worst aspect: is it the way the participant struggle to sound challenged and intrigued ("Hmmm, could it be... Ooh, no, hang on"), or is it the cringe-making humour the puzzles are wrapped up in ("The dictator of Arbitraria is disturbed by the bells of St Michael-of-the-Underpants")? Either way, if your brain gets twisted it's probably because it keeps shifting around in an effort to stay awake.

And then there's *Veg Tulk*, on Friday afternoons, a phone-in on top of vegetables ("You've got a problem with celery, Jane"). Perhaps there genuinely is a hitherto-unmet public demand for more vegetable-themed programmes, but I suspect the rationale behind this is as a showcase for the chirpy charms of grocers Charlie Hicks and Greg Wallace, the Russ and Jono of the vegetable world, but we'll let it go for now!

You might think that a life spent among Maris Pipers and curly kale would induce serenity, but they seem fuelled by a determination to show that vegetables can be fun, a proposition that fails at the first sprout.

The new schedule isn't wholly without merit - *Front Row*, for instance, is far more incisive than *Kaleidoscope* (though I still miss Paul Vaughn). But on the whole, I stand corrected. Sorry.



A light drama in Devon

The planthunter and collector, Dr Jimmy Smart, is a legend in his lifetime. His garden is not only a marvel of myriad varieties, it also stages a great play of colour and shade. By Kirsty Ferguson

The north Devon coast is something of a honeypot for holidaying garden fanciers. And last Monday, they all seemed to be conging on Dr Smart's garden; ee thread-laned miles from Instow, with the alarming focus swarm of bees.

wondered if I had unknowingly picked an NGS day to visit Marld Hill, but Dr Smart brushed my first question with a smile, assuring me that it was "always this".

"*tms*". had spent the morning eight et away at Tapeley Park (a gar- currently enjoying a brilliant re- sponse), and was feeling ticulturally pretty replete. How- r, Tapeley's owner, Hector istie, gave both Dr Smart and garden such an enthusiastic tes- onial that it seemed positively ng-headed to duck out of the op- tunity to pay a visit. He was it, too. I don't think I have ever n to a garden that has exceed- my expectations so much.

my expectations so much. Dr Jimmy Smart MBE VMH is a rightly octogenarian who even before his retirement from medicine in 1975 had become something of a legend in horticultural circles. Let's soon to find out why. Almost first two plants that caught my eye - a low evergreen mound of t-scented *Prostanthera cuneata* - mothered in pretty white flowers, and a clump of the lilyish *Endymion hispanicus* - turned out never been introduced to this country by Dr Smart. (It must have seemed as though I had researched his horticultural career pretty thoroughly, but I must confess it was sheer coincidence.)

as we rounded the head of the bend and started to climb the bank, Dr Smart paused to introduce a pair of handsome Turkish dodonbars, *Rungernia*, and remembered driving them home to wood 30 years earlier. "What, all the way from Turkey?" I gaped. "Yes," he grinned, evidently enjoying the impression he had made,

in Exbury". Although the Smarts had been living at Marwood since 1949, the garden was begun during the early 1960s when they found themselves able to purchase the valley through pasture that lay across the hill below their house. A stream bed through the bottom of the valley, which was dammed twice in order to form two lakes.

and while the bones of the garden started to take shape, Dr. Hart planted trees: trees and

Marwood Hill, a remarkable collectors' garden with a bold outlook



John Lawrence

shrubs raised from seed collected on trips to Australia and the Americas, trees bought from specialist nurseries, trees given by friends and colleagues who had become interested in his collection of the rarer and more beautiful magnolias, eucalyptuses, birches, willows and conifers.

This high-contrast, black-and-white image appears to be a scan of a physical object or a heavily underexposed photograph. The upper portion is dominated by a dark, almost black, surface with subtle vertical grain or noise. In the upper right quadrant, there is a prominent, bright, overexposed area with distinct vertical streaks and some horizontal patterns, possibly representing light reflecting off a rough surface or a lens flare. The lower half of the image is mostly in deep shadow, with some faint, irregular white patterns and noise visible, suggesting a low-light environment or a heavily underexposed shot. The overall quality is grainy and lacks clear, legible content.

though, are packed with orange and yellow giant primulas, intricately veined purple and white irises, arums lilies and astilbes, of which Dr. Smart has the National Collection. It comes as no surprise to learn that he also has the National Collections of *Iris ensata* and tulbaghias, too.

Just as the success of the birch and eucalyptus grove turns on the play of light and shadow between the tree trunks, so the clumps of bamboo by the lake have been thinned dramatically to allow each cane to be seen in isolation — rather than forming a dense, light-blocking screen. This technique is practised also at Great Dixter, and repays the effort enormously.

Returning up the steep slope towards the new house that the Smarts have built for themselves at the top of the garden, we stopped at the first patch of level ground I had seen since my arrival. The rose- and wisteria-covered pergola arching overhead and the rows of fat, colourful herbaceous borders here give more than a passing nod to Giverny, but I got the impression that Dr Smart's heart lies with trees on steep hill-sides rather than the level world of lawns and borders.

"Well, it's much easier to garden on a slope," said (a clearly very fit) Dr Smart looking up into the pergola. "I couldn't bear to have a level garden." It's a good point: there are so many plants, trees included, that offer their best perspectives to the birds; a problem that cunning use of a sloping site (or pergola) can resolve.

No less than five gardeners, under the headship of Malcolm Pharaoh, are employed at Marwood Hill, which for a garden in private ownership is pretty remarkable these days. A large nursery occupies the old walled garden, selling a huge range of plants — nearly all of which are propagated from the garden, which helps to offset the costs.

Thirty years on, this part of the garden is still in the process of maturing, and it is obvious that, where space allows, Dr Smart is still adding to his collection. The 2 acres are as densely packed as the flowers on his *Cornus kousa chinensis*, and as Dr Smart says of these abundant blooms, "You couldn't stick a pin between them."

The wide and tranquil expanses of the lakes, however, preserves the garden from any sense of becoming overcrowding. The margin

Marwood Hill Gardens (01271 42528) are open every day from dawn to dusk. The plant centre is open daily 11am-5pm. Admission (honesty box) adults £2; OAP £1.50; children under 12 free.

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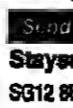
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Garden Picture Libra

A soothing trickle of artistry

Installing a fountain in your garden is not as difficult as you might think. By Anna Pavord

Perhaps this is a tactless time to talk about water in the garden. June has given us almost too much of it, though I'm not complaining. The old beech trees are sighing gently with contentment and relief as the rain works more and more deeply into the soil around their roots.

But the heat-wave that coincided with the Chelsea Flower Show in late May made water the most important single element in the show gardens there. You needed its cooling promises; you were seduced by its sparkle in the brilliant light; you were calmed by the sound of water rippling back into itself from simple jets or bubble fountains. Italy in central London. It can be done.

You will need help (see above). Water has to stay where it is put and I wouldn't be any happier fiddling around with its provision in the garden than I would be sorting out the plumbing in the house. I'm thinking

here of something more ambitious (and satisfying) than a free-form, pre-moulded amoeba pool of the type you find in garden centres.

A water feature may be no more than a large sink or stone trough, filled with shells and with a circulating pump cunningly hidden below. The water bubbles up through a pipe in the centre of the trough and spills out over the stones to return to the pump below. Such a feature is soothing, relatively cheap, and simple to set up. Stylistically, it is the garden equivalent of the beige suit. It will go anywhere. It can sit on a wooden deck five storeys above ground or be tucked under a wall in a basement well. It is as happy in a Japanese garden as it is in a Mediterranean one.

Once you get into the territory of lion's masks and fake lead troughs, you need more particular props: box hedges, like a garden made with nostalgia in mind.

A lion's mask (or any other kind of waterspout) will need to be fixed against something solid, so this kind of water feature is likely to be tucked against a wall, with the water falling from the lion's mouth into a trough below. The water will make more of a plashing noise than the gently bubbling pebble fountain, but the water itself can be recycled in just the same way.

If you want a proper pool, your gardening life will become more complicated and more expensive. A pool can't be dropped into place as easily as a lion's mask spot. It needs to link with the overall plan of the garden. You may want it set so that you can see it from inside the house. You may want it next to a sitting-out area. If you have a conservatory tacked on to the back of the house, you could do something tricksy and have half the pool inside the conservatory, half outside.

The position of the pool will be affected by the way you decide to install it: dug out so that the water is at ground level, or built up so you avoid the mess and expense of excavating. With both it is the finish that is important. There may be practical reasons why digging out is not an option. Many town houses have no rear access: there is no way you can get even a mini-digger into place and all earth has to be carted out through the hall. But a built-up pool will work only if, in a visual sense, it is properly "anchored" to the ground and the rest of its surroundings.

A box hedge planted round the retaining wall of the pool will do this and give the charming effect (provided that you design the lip of the pool with a light hand) that the water itself is held only in a bowl of box. Or you can make a virtue of the raised retaining wall round a pool and treat it as a garden seat, extending the lip with wooden slats. You could render the wall and plant it with ivy. Whether the pool is raised or excavated, the edging will make or break it. The designer Arabella Lennox-Boyd, who scooped the Best Garden award at the Chelsea Flower Show this year, brought the grass surround of her pool right up to the water's edge, with no paving in between. The effect was stunning though some gloom and doom merchants saw difficulties in edging grass in such a situation. I'd say it was worth the effort 10 times over and not difficult if you edge with a tool such as single-handed sheep shears. You could then hold the tufts of grass in your other hand to stop most of it falling in the water.

The shape of a pool matters, too; the simpler the better. In the long, narrow configuration of a typical town garden, a circular pool, set centrally, will break up the space and work profitably against the geometry. If you have brick paths or a brick patio, then the surround of the pool (if there is to be one) should be brick, too. The smaller the garden, the fewer different materials you should use in it. The pool needn't be planted, but a simple reflecting pool works best if it is painted black inside. I'd still have a jet installed, even if it rarely jets. The noise of water is an important reason for having it in the first place.

FACT FILE

Mark Anthony Walker Landscape Architects, 1 College Street St Albans, Herts AL3 4PW (01727 840039). At Chelsea Mark Walker created the impossible: a wild, willow wetland crossed by a crisp modern deck. His decking was designed by Gunnar Orefelt at Orefelt Associates, 5 Haydens Place, London W1 (0171-243 3181).

Simon and Kate Harman, Dorking Aquatics, Tarn Ends, Broad Lane, Newdigate, Surrey RH8 5AT (01306 631064). Check them out at the Hampton Court Flower Show (9-12 July); they have taken Monet's paintings of his own water-garden as the inspiration for their display.

A good contractor is Colin Withycombe, Park Garden Services, 6 Shepherds Rise, Verham Dean, Andover, Hants SP11 0HD (01264 737296).

Solar-powered fountains from Solar Solutions, 29 Wallis Street, Fishguard, Dyfed SA65 9EP (01348 874762) no mains electricity cables. The standard version has a big glass solar panel, and costs £154. The de luxe version has a smaller, unbreakable panel, at £289.

In sunny conditions both can pump 700 litres an hour. If it's raining, you probably won't be sitting by the pool anyway.

For ideas on designing a water feature with the safety of small children in mind, contact Tetra, Mitchell House, Southampton Road, Eastleigh, Hants SO50 9XD (01703 620500).

WEEKEND WORK

- Tidy up plants that you do not wish to self-seed, such as aquilegia. Cut right down to the ground, these will soon produce mounds of fresh, new foliage. Cut out dead flowering stems from pulmonaria and other such spring-flowering plants.
- Tidy up clumps of iris, cutting out the flower stems and pulling away any withered foliage. Congested clumps can be split up as soon as flowering has finished. Choose plump rhizomes with new roots for replanting and set them so that the rhizome is above soil, with bone meal worked into the ground below.
- Dead head roses and peonies. The wet weather has caused the flowers of many roses to "ball" and rot on the stem before they have even come out. At least you can prevent the dead petals from smothering the buds to come, which may have better luck.
- Prune gooseberries as soon as you have finished picking the fruit. The bushes are best grown on a short leg, so cut out any growths that are springing from below this leg. Prune to keep the bush open and plenty of space between the branches. The more air that blows through them, the better.
- Continue to sow regular short rows of lettuces and radishes in the hope of achieving a smooth succession of produce. Continue to pinch

out side growths from cordon tomatoes. Protect young plants of Brussels sprouts and other succulent greens from pigeons and slugs.

■ New dahlias plants should be in the ground now, well protected against slugs. Pinch out the tops of young plants as they grow to make them bushy and tie the stems to strong stakes as soon as the growth becomes heavy. Stop chrysanthemums setting out last month.



CUTTINGS

EARLIER THIS year I wrote about Alison Pringle, who threw in her life as an artist and etcher to retrain as a gardener by way of the National Trust's apprenticeship scheme. The Trust is now seeking applicants for its new intake of students, to start work this September. There are 10 places for people of 16-19 and two for adult trainees. Adults start their training either at Anglesey Abbey in Cambridgeshire or at Hinton Ampner in Hampshire.

The apprenticeship programme lasts for three years. Students get paid and the training combines practical skills and experience gained at Trust gardens with block release study courses held at Bicton College in Devon. Apprenticeships are available in Trust gardens in Cornwall, Devon, Suffolk, Warwickshire, north Wales, Wiltshire, Dorset, Derbyshire and Kent. There has never been a better time to become a gardener, and this is a Rolls-Royce training. For details contact John McKenna (01208 265245).

ROBERT FORTUNE, the plant collector who brought the kumquat to Britain and introduced tea to India, has become one of only a handful of horticulturists to

be honoured by an English Heritage blue plaque. It marks the three-storey, stucco-faced house at 9 Glaston Road, London SW10, where Fortune lived for more than 20 years until his death in 1880. Fortune travelled in China, Japan, Java and the Philippines, surviving storms, fevers and pirate attacks. As well as the kumquat he introduced tree peonies, the golden larch, the fan palm and many rhododendrons and azaleas. Think of him when you plant *Weigela florida*.

Jasminum nudiflorum, *Prunus triloba* or *Cryptomeria japonica*. They are all his plants.

DOES FENG SHUI matter in the garden? Not as much as decent soil and a sheltered aspect, I'd say, but Roni Jay, author of *Feng Shui in Your Garden* (Thorsons, £9.99) disagrees. If you too think that the straight lines of trees are improved by zig-zag paper hangings (to calm the chi), this is compulsory reading. No garden can have good feng shui unless it contains water. But will I ever get around to making the boat-shaped basket entwined with blue ribbon to float on the water and steady the flow of this endlessly demanding chi? I can't see it.

ANNA PAVORD

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Wild and free in the woods

Daniel Butler follows a champion fungi-gatherer in a summer spray through the forest

CLIVE HOULDER'S enthusiasm is almost tangible. "The fairy rings are fantastic this year. I'm picking basket after basket and just keep coming." He is the only full-time wild mushroom collector, and this is turning his best-ever season.

Though most people think of mushrooms as an autumn crop, Clive's year starts in April, building through the summer. "This began in March, which is normally pretty bleak, and has just gone."

As a result, now is a good time for me to begin what can easily turn an obsession. Indeed, already many people have begun to collect mushrooms that fears have voiced about over-picking. Clive dismisses such concerns as less:

"Mushroom is no more than a living body - the fungal equivalent of an apple," he says. "So provided cut them carefully and don't age the underground structures they should keep coming up after year."

Several of the best species are flushing by the thousand and here for the taking. Pick of the bunch is undoubtedly the chanterelle, *Cantharellus cibarius*, a rank it alongside ceps and truffles, many claiming its delicate flavour beaten only by truffles. But the last are almost impossible without a trained dog or pig. Chanterelles are there for the taking; if you get the bang of spotting

them bright yellow, this delicate trumpet of a mushroom is surprisingly hard to identify.

Nestles among the leaf mould,

courting the ground in deciduous woodland - beech and chestnut are particularly good - and the ones that once one is spotted further scrutiny will reveal a small minority. For a novice the



The chanterelle, hard to spot despite its distinctive yellow colouring

Charlie Stebbings

"The first ones are up," says Houlder. "And the first real flush will be here any day."

There is only one species easily confused with the chanterelle: the false chanterelle, *Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca*. This makes identification difficult, and is mildly poisonous in quantity.

Differences can seem slight, but the real McCoy is more golden and its gills, which run down the stalk, frequently rejoin each other after separating. The best test, however, is the smell. The true chanterelle has a distinct aroma of apricots that can be positively overpowering in

The slight element of doubt of this caveat is certain to put off most beginners. *Nil desperandum*: there are other unmissable species on hand. Most obvious is the giant puffball, *Langermannia gigantea*, which even the most timid budding mycologist will be able to name with certainty. This spherical mush-

room can grow to two-and-a-half feet in diameter and - as one guidebook points out - the only possible confusion is with a discarded foot ball (unfortunately the latter are all too common in its favoured habitat of nettle-filled hedges and old rubbish tips). These are also coming up early this year.

Chicken of the Woods, *Laetiporus sulphureus*, is another distinctive species. This is a parasite that grows plate-like on the sides of deciduous trees, particularly oak, chestnut and beech. As its Latin name suggests, this is a sulphurous yellow when in prime condition, although later it pales to a chalky

white and is decidedly tough and flavourless. If the livid colour of young specimens worries those of a nervous disposition, its great benefit is that it is almost impossible to mistake. If you find a bright yellow dinner-plate stuck to the side of an oak, there are no alternative candidates. Better still, it makes excellent eating with a good, nutty flavour and firm meaty texture that live up to its name. Indeed, the last is almost its most important gastronomic attribute as - unlike most fungi - it can be casseroled and remain intact.

Most common of all is the purple-brown lobes of Jew's Ear, *Auricularia auricula-judae*. Its traditional and Latin names derive from its close resemblance to a human ear and the fact it grows on elder, the tree on which Judas reputedly hanged himself.

This fungus grows all year round and, again, is almost impossible to mistake. Its drawback is that it is not the most edible of wild fungi, requiring slow simmering for at least half an hour to break down the rubbery texture. It comes into its own, however, when dried, powdered and used as a flavouring.

Beginners could do worse than start with the fairy ring champignon, *Marasmius oreades*. This, as its name suggests, grows in dense rings of littleawn caps. It has the advantage of being fairly common and it makes excellent eating. The stalks are tough, however, and harvesting them is a case for scissors rather than the mushroom picker's more usual knife. Unfortunately, there is a similar poisonous species and care should be taken, but the two can easily be told apart by looking at the junction of gills and stem. *Marasmius* curve back up into the cap, while those of its toxic rival, *Citocybe rivulosa*, curve towards the ground.

Meanwhile, Clive Houlder's advice to new wild fungi hunters is to follow some basic rules: "Ask the landowners' permission, always use a knife - this avoids damage to the crucial subsoil structure, and have a really good field guidebook. The last is just to help you sleep - you'll be too scared of making a mistake for there to be any danger."

How to identify Edible Mushrooms by Harding, Lyon and Tomblin (Collins, £9.99) is an excellent pocket guide. Beginners may prefer *The Ultimate Mushroom Book* by Peter Jordan and Steven Wheeler (Lorenz Books, £16.95) copies of which are available from TMP, Poppy Cottage, Station Road, Burnham Market, Norfolk PE31 8HA (01328 738341).

What's on this weekend

BY SOME Pig's in, Norfolk Nog Summer Lighting this weekend the suitable setting of a Kentish cottage. The Hop Farm at Beltring is hosting a craft Beer Festival where you can sample a selection from more than 90 British beers, and live a traditional tipping summer, died by modern technology and maybe a pint of ale. Teatotallers have fun exploring the castles, meeting ant shire horses and investigating the Happy Hoppers adventure playground.

For Britain Festival, 27 and 28 June 11am onwards the Hop Farm Country Park, Beltring, Paddock Wood, Kent (01622 872068, <http://www.uk-travelguide.co.uk/hop-farm/index.htm>). Day tickets, adults £5, children £3.

SALLY KINDBERG



Beware the bracken fronds

Avoid ferny ground this summer: the plants harbour ticks carrying a debilitating disease. By Malcolm Smith

WHAT COULD be healthier? A summer walk across some of Britain's finest hills and moors, fresh air, and the pungent, earthy aroma of bracken as you crush it underfoot. The answer, it seems, is the very same walk, but avoiding as much of the bracken as possible.

For bracken is the ideal plant to harbour ticks - tiny, blood-sucking parasites - which can carry bacteria that cause Lyme disease, a debilitating condition unlike arthritis.

In extreme cases, the disease can be fatal. More worryingly, its incidence is increasing and it is almost certain to increase further as climate change brings generally warmer, and sometimes wetter, weather; just what the ticks thrive on in their bracken hideaways.

At the same time, the area of land covered by bracken, a toughie of a fern that has already spread over 2.5 million acres of Britain, is expanding especially in our national parks and other hill areas popular with walkers.

Named after Old Lyme in Connecticut, where the disease was first diagnosed in the Seventies, Lyme disease affects some domestic and wild animals as well as man, but is carried by others, seemingly without causing them ill health. The first sign

is a granular-looking rash in the vicinity of the bite - though what makes diagnosis problematical is that around four in every 10 people infected get no such reddening. The bacteria go on to cause a general flu-like feeling with loss of appetite and insomnia. If not treated at this stage, the disease becomes chronic. The nervous system and joints suffer, particularly the larger ones - hence the severe arthritis that can be so debilitating. Yet treatment with antibiotics early on can stop Lyme disease in its tracks.

Roy Brown, professor of country-

side management at Manchester Metropolitan University, who is an expert on bracken and its problems, has followed the growing incidence of the disease. In some parts of the North York Moors he recorded nine ticks per square metre of vegetation in 1979 (when he first began his records; this number has risen consistently over the intervening years, to reach 33 last year. He has recorded a similar pattern in the Quantocks and elsewhere).

"Numbers are looking very high this summer, particularly now, which is their peak time, because the weather

has been ideal. Only a few hundred cases of Lyme disease are recorded in Britain each year but many more go unrecorded. It often isn't diagnosed. In the United States, where it is now second to HIV as the most widely reported persistent infection, there were 12,000 new cases last year. In Croatia, where it has really taken off, I know that there were perhaps 20 cases annually 15 years ago. Last year 1,800 were reported there."

"Because bracken is spreading and our climate warming, it is certain to continue to increase here, too."

Bracken is an excellent tick habitat. To survive all stages in their life cycle, these little suckers need high humidity and protection from extremes of temperature - drying out, especially - something that growing bracken can provide par excellence in spring and summer. In winter, the rusty brown, dead growth is equally protective. But bracken is also perfect as a launching-pad for hungry ticks. They can climb up the fronds and simply wait until a human being, dog or another animal brushes past. Bare skin is ideal. And while legs are particularly vulnerable, don't forget that bracken can grow to 6ft in height; it

can easily be chest high.

One of the world's most successful plants, bracken grows on every continent except Antarctica. "In Britain," says Professor Brown, "it's particularly bad in eastern Scotland, Cumbria, the North York Moors, much of Wales and the south west of England. It's spreading on to many roadside verges and in the uplands by as much as 3 per cent in area each year."

Once bracken is established it is difficult to eradicate, because it grows from a dense mass of underground rhizomes.

Over most of Britain, there are now grants available to eradicate it. Farmers are reluctant to cut it because of the enormous labour involved. Machine cutting may be out of the question, since it often grows on uneven ground. Spraying with a bracken-specific herbicide is expensive, because it usually has to be done by helicopter, and may also run the unacceptable risk of contaminating water supplies.

Longer frost-free periods, more summer sun to provide warm growing conditions, and a damper climate, are just what bracken needs. So, to do the ticks that spread Lyme disease. In spite

cities of the plain

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Sunday Times



Raoul Millais' portrait of Greyskin, stolen in November

The artist, the missing horse and the clairvoyant

THE PAINTING shown here was stolen from the home of the veteran artist Raoul Millais in the early hours of 1 November last year, a couple of weeks after his 96th birthday. Thieves broke into his 15th-century manor-house in Oxfordshire at about 3am and made away with a haul of paintings, ceramic figures and sculpture worth many thousands of pounds.

Later that morning his step-daughter, Karol Maxwell, remembered that a medium who lived in a Welsh castle had once located two terriers that went missing from a cousin's home. When Karol rang Mrs Sullivan and asked her to help, she said she needed a piece from one of the stolen objects to work from, so into the post went the toe of a Chinese ceramic figure broken off in the raid, and a nail from which one of the pictures had been hanging.

A couple of nights later, Karol and her husband Simon came home to find a message on their answering machine. Mrs Sullivan reported, with precise directions, that the hoard was in a barn – one of a group of disused farm buildings – on the Swinbrook estate, only 10 minutes' drive from Raoul's home. Luckily Simon knew the agent, so he rang and asked the man to meet him at the barn immediately.

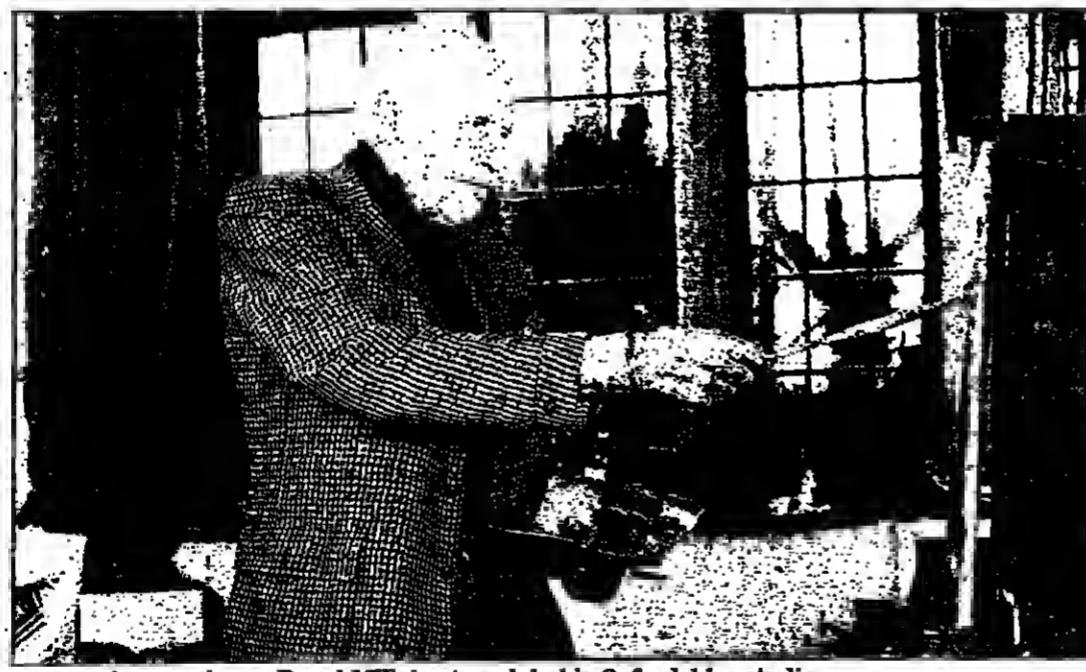
A search of the building revealed nothing. But almost before it had been completed, Mrs Sullivan put on the line again to say that the stolen goods were by then at Minter Lovell, a couple of miles further east. Next she saw the loot in a white van, heading southwards down the M25 and the M2 into Kent. Finally she said that the pictures had been shipped abroad through Ramsgate, but that the other objects had gone to Folkestone.

The police did not discount Mrs Sullivan's commentary; indeed, they let on that they had used a clairvoyant to help locate bodies buried by the Gloucester mass murderer Frederick West. But they are now confident that they know the identity of the thieves, and they believe that the loot is still in England, held by some receiver or shady dealer until the air clears.

The villains must have known that the man they robbed was extremely old, because they had staked out the premises beforehand. What they could not have been aware of was that the picture they stole was his absolute favourite, with a fascinating little saga behind it.

Raoul found Greyskin in 1933 on a mountainside in Wales. His owner claimed that he had won all but two of his 22 point-to-point races, and was so full of energy that he often

When a favourite portrait was stolen, the painter and huntsman Raoul Millais took unusual steps to find it. By Duff Hart-Davis



An amazing survivor – Raoul Millais at work in his Oxfordshire studio

tried to go round the course again. Raoul bought him for £35 and brought him back to hunt in the Beaufort country, where he went like the wind for several seasons, only just under control, with his rider usually managing to pull him up "just before we reached the outskirts of Bristol". Then in 1937 Greyskin put his foot in a hole at full gallop and turned two forward somersaults. The local parson, riding behind, began mentally reciting the funeral service, for when Raoul came up for the first time, still in the saddle, his head seemed to be six inches lower than

before. The horse was unhurt, but Raoul was carried off on a gate, with a bone in his neck broken and his back dislocated.

Although the accident effectively ended his hunting career, it by no means shortened his life. Sixty-one years later, he looks back on that

NATURE NOTE



The acquisitive jackdaw

OWNERS OF old houses should keep an eye on their chimneys, for there is a good chance that jackdaws will have nested in them, and if flames are not cleared during summer, the first fire or chilly autumn evening may set off a spectacular blaze aloft.

The grey-capped birds – cousins of rooks and crows – always seek out enclosed spaces, and seem to like nesting close to man. If they gain access to roof spaces, they sometimes build colossal structures, adding to them year after year. They live in colonies of large families, and although less notorious than magpies for

robbing other birds' nests, they do eat eggs.

Like magpies, they have a reputation for general thieving. Experiments in which children set out shiny objects confirmed that jackdaws are attracted by bright trinkets, perhaps

thinking they are drops of water, and sometimes carry them off – a habit reflected in the Victorian poem by the Rev R.H. Barham about the jackdaw of Rheims, which stole the archbishop's ring, was cursed and fell ill – but then recovered when the curse was lifted, and turned devout.

DUFF HART-DAVIS

Thus I took over a huge bundle of papers which contained four, five, six versions of the same stories, each slightly different, and usually losing vitality the more they were worked over.

Our hope now is that the book, if it does nothing else, will flush out the painting of Greyskin, and restore it to its rightful place on the wall of Raoul's sitting-room.

Raoul Millais: His Life and Work is published by Susan Hill Press, £5

slight mishap with memory undimmed. In general, possessions now mean little to him, but he is seriously disheartened by the loss of this one glorious picture, which he painted after the Second World War in affectionate memory of the animal that nearly killed him.

I can vouch for the fact that Raoul is an amazing survivor; for I have been working with him, on and off, over the past 18 months, writing an illustrated biography of him.

He was already 94 when I began work on the book, and at the outset I had to make a tricky decision. Since he was still very much alive I could hardly write in the past tense, as if he were dead – yet, equally, it seemed risky to use the present ("He fires off witty letters every day", and so on) as neither I nor his family could be sure that he would live to see publication.

I took the risk – and happily he is still with us. Even better, we are still on speaking terms: I have had four letters from him in the past week alone, all full of ridiculous jokes. Although a bit bent, and less now than his original 6ft 6in, he is still a commanding figure, his beautiful manners those of the archetypal Edwardian country gentleman.

In some ways writing his life was a nightmare, for he never retained letters or other papers, and he scattered his own pictures about with abandon. For 50 years, from the Twenties to the Seventies, he painted sporting pictures with immense industry; yet he kept no records of where they went, and he gave away dozens to people who inadvertently praised them. A visitor had only to say, "Isn't that marvellous!" for him to reply, "Oh – do you like it? Do have it, then."

On the other hand, he had repeatedly written up episodes of his own life, polishing and repolishing draft after draft. The trouble was that, although he commands a sharp and humorous turn of phrase, he has never had the knack of running short pieces together into a continuous narrative.

Thus I took over a huge bundle of

fence where you need to turn left. You may first have to follow it down to a kissing-gate near the obelisk and then backtrack up the other side. This path will take you along the edge of a field, across a stream and past some farm buildings and a pond. Eventually you get to Snitterfield fruit farm, where scores of local children once spent their hard-earned summer holidays picking strawberries with their parents, and moaning that they would rather be out with their friends.

You will come out on King Lane. Turn right and walk to its junction with Ingon Lane, where you need to turn left and follow the road across a busy new bypass to a stone memorial cross at the top of White Horse Hill.

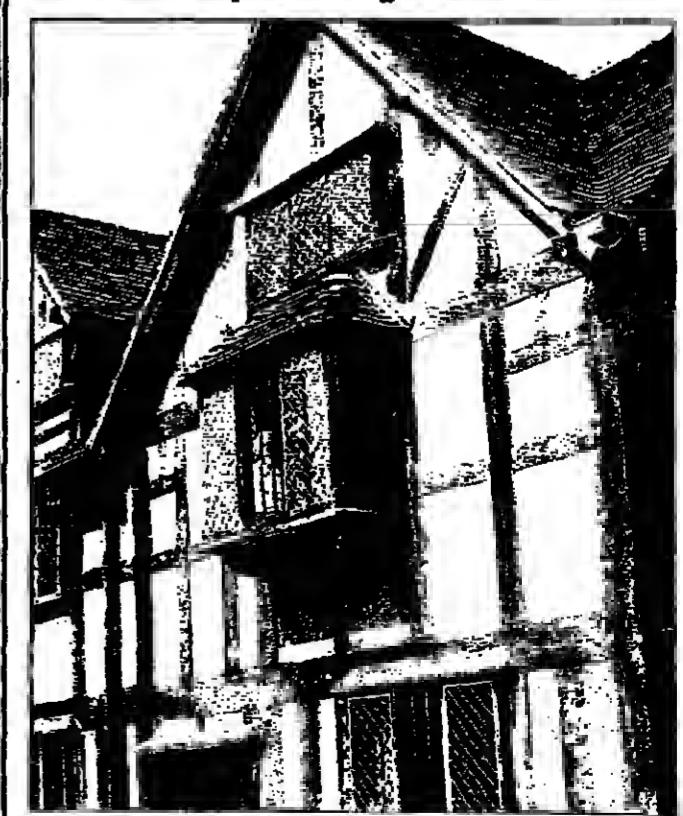
The stone bench here is a little hard on the behind, but the view across the Avon valley will ease the pain. When the air is fresh and clear you can see for miles, right over to Edge Hill – site of the first major battle in the Civil War.

From here the road falls into the village, and at the crossroads the Foxhunter awaits. A pint of Saddlers beer goes down well with some home-made faggots. If you're tempted to have a second helping of both, there's always a bus that will take you back to Stratford – but they do not run frequently, so check with the tourist board or Stagecoach before setting out.

From the Foxhunter follow your footsteps back down King's Lane to Round House Farm, where a path is marked leading off to the left. Follow the path along beside a field, cross a fence at the end and turn right, heading downhill past a copse, and eventually you will come to a gravel drive leading to Clopton house, a 17th-century manor-house. As with many old houses, legends abound: Clopton was purportedly a meeting-place for the conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot.

You are now on the outskirts of Stratford, and should easily find your way back, stopping off for a drink on the way. Refreshment is in plentiful supply in the town, which has one of the highest densities of pubs in Britain. For atmosphere – and in season – a chance to star-spot, head for the Dirty Duck on the river by the theatre. It's a summer favourite for townsfolk, tourists and actors alike, and it serves a welcome pint of Flowers Original Bitter.

Map: Ordnance Survey Landranger map 151. Stratford-upon-Avon Tourist Office: 01789 293127. The wood runs up to a



Shakespeare's birthplace David Hunter/MSI

It's time to hit the bottle

Whether it's hot and sunny or cool and cloudy, there's something hugely appealing about eating outside in the summer. If barbecues get your mouth watering, do more than just placing a few sausages on the grill this year and try some sauces to put with or on your drumsticks



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THE TASTE OF ... SOY SAUCE

IT'S THE Japanese equivalent of salt and pepper. You'll find it on every table, it's added to nearly every dish, and it's now becoming so popular in the West that the major producer Kikkoman has recently opened a brewery in The Netherlands just to cater for the European demand for soy sauce.

Although Chinese and Japanese soy sauce have the same name and the same main ingredient, the Japanese claim that they are really very different products. Japanese soy sauce uses more wheat, is sweeter and less salty in taste, and can take up to a year to ferment, as opposed to the 30 days commonly used for Chinese soy sauce - hence its greater cost.

One of the major areas of soy sauce production in Japan is the Chiba prefecture, to the east of Tokyo. In Choshi, the third biggest fishing port, Yamasa has been making the dark, aromatic liquid since 1645. The company says that the confluence of warm and cold Pacific Ocean currents on Japan's eastern seaboard makes this the ideal location for brewing top-quality soy sauce.

Inland, at Noda, Kikkoman offer the public guided tours of their brewery (to arrange a guided tour telephone the head office in Tokyo on 013 3233 5610 and ask for the international operation division). However, most visitors to the prefecture probably know the area better as the home of Tokyo Disneyland, which opened in 1983 in Urayasu city, just across the river from Tokyo.

The practice of seasoning dishes with soy sauce originated in China, but about 1,500 years ago Buddhist monks took the tradition to Japan. Soy sauce, or shoyu, was first commercially manufactured in the 16th century and was exported to Europe about 100 years later. It is said to have been the secret seasoning served at the court



banquets of Louis XIV. There are two main types of soy sauce - light and dark. Dark is the most common but light, which is paler and stronger, can be used when you don't want to give a dish colour. There are also local variations. Tamari, which is made in central Honshu is a wheat-free soy sauce with a stronger, sharper taste and Shōtsūru, which is made in the Akita province in the north, has a pale yellow colour.

Like fine wine, naturally brewed soy sauce should be treated with care, say its manufacturers. High temperatures and direct exposure to the air encourage oxidation, which may lead to the sauce losing flavour and aroma. Always screw the cap on the bottle tightly and store it somewhere cool. The Japanese food expert Lesley Downer recommends keeping a large bottle of soy sauce in the fridge and decanting it into a smaller dispenser for the table.

When cooking with soy sauce, to keep both the taste and the aroma it is best to add it to a dish at the last minute. And don't just think of soy sauce as an ingredient for oriental recipes. Yamasa recommend using their soy sauce with a wide range of dishes - including beef stew, barbecued chicken and Greek salad.

NIKKI SPENCER

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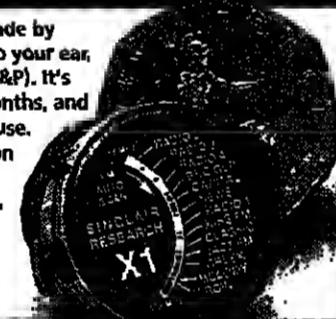
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How the Ralph Lauren brochures show paint samples: colours are mostly off the wall and are presented as couture items. From the left: denim to wear; satin evening gown; walls painted in chambray; suede dress. Farrow & Ball, meanwhile, take a more conventional approach with their brochure (far right)

What the best-dressed walls are wearing this season

NO LONGER satisfied with its monopoly on brightly coloured sweaters, Benetton has turned its attention to interiors, and has filled the shelves at B&Q with pots of brightly coloured household paint. There are currently 18 suitably vibrant shades to choose from, all of which scream through their distinctive see-through pots (designed with the customer's convenience in mind – no more mess around prising the lid off the wrong pot by mistake), and there are three special-effect finishes: Metallic, Denim and Rag & Roll.

Benetton's assault on the interiors market is, according to its PR office, simply a reaction to market forces. "Benetton is famous for bringing colour into people's lives through its clothes and accessories, and the company is responding to a huge surge of interest in home decoration and DIY." They also point out that the company's official name is United Colors of Benetton, and that paint is an obvious extension of that brand image.

The glossy paint brochure (featuring the usual weird close-ups of pubescent teenagers), contains little stuck-in-squares of card on to which paint samples have been applied. The 18 "colours" look good, but the metallic finish is more snail-trail than metal sheen; the Jeans range just looks uneven, hardly the texture of denim; and the Rag & Roll is as mottled as you might expect – rag rolling went out in the late Eighties and should not be encouraged to come back.

According to B&Q, Benetton's paint sales so far have been good. The company is not the first fashion label to enter the paint arena. Next and Marks & Spencer both sell paint as well as clothes – the difference, however, is that they also sell bedding, furniture and wallpaper and their decision to sell paint as well seems quite logical. Similarly, Ralph Lauren has extended his interiors collection to include paint. But, unlike Next and M&S, Ralph Lauren peddles paints in the same way he



Textures as home decoration – Ralph Lauren paint swatches, from left: grey flannel; satin; suede; denim

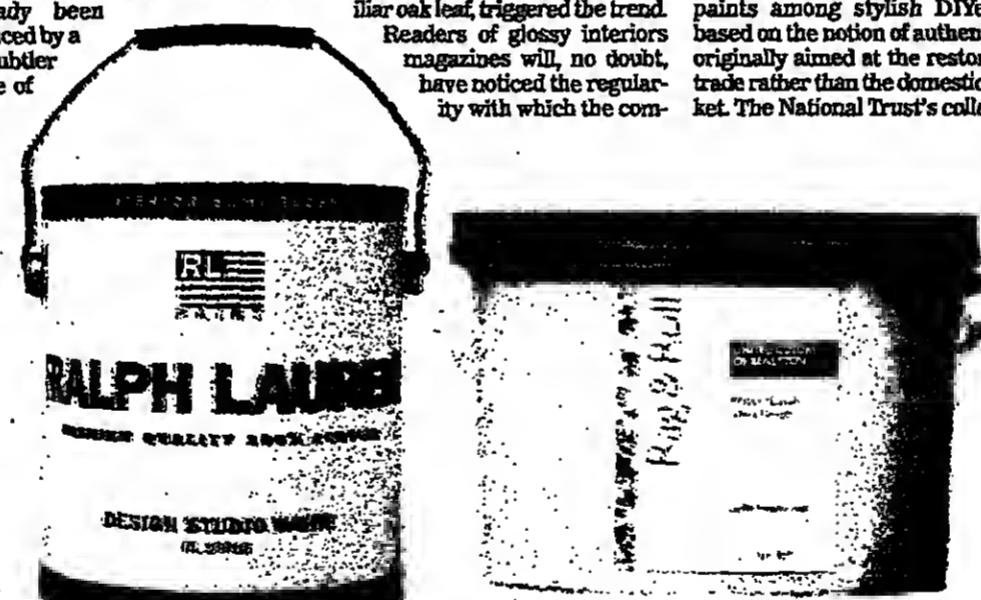
When is magnolia not magnolia? When it's a heritage white. From clothes retailers to the National Trust, designer paint ranges are all the rage. By Charlotte Packer

sells his clothes and perfume: it's all about aspirations and lifestyle.

The Ralph Lauren paint catalogue is subtitled Lifestyles, and it contains five collections: Thoroughbred, Safari, Country, Santa Fe and Sport. The words that accompany the charts are as purple as Duke's Vineyard, a deep maroon from the Thoroughbred collection and are occasionally oddly specific. Sport, we are told, is a range of colours that "create bold definition for a ski lodge or a beach house". So, no good for the spare room then.

I'm sure the paints are lovely and his fabled white collection (33 different shades), is regarded with something approaching reverence among style-conscious Americans, particularly the dazzling Design Studio White. But in my opinion the best thing about them is the unashamedly all-American tin emblazoned with a customised version of the Stars and Stripes.

It is easy to laugh at Ralph Lauren's pompously and improbably named paints, safe in the knowledge that we'd never be so foolish as to



part with cash in exchange for so obvious a marketing ploy: buy Ralph's paint and invitations to watch polo will follow. But the fact is, we have already been seduced by a far subtler piece of

lifestyle marketing: "heritage". Farrow & Ball's range of paints for the National Trust, which come in smart tins bearing the Trust's familiar oak leaf, triggered the trend.

Readers of glossy interiors magazines will, no doubt, have noticed the regularity with which the com-

pany crops up in the decorating details that accompany house features.

The growing popularity of these paints among stylish DIYers is based on the notion of authenticity, originally aimed at the restoration trade rather than the domestic market. The National Trust's collection

was created in the Eighties when the Trust decided to put its name to the traditional paints. Farrow & Ball had been supplying for all its refurbishment works.

The classy, subdued tones that make up the company's own Archive Collection and National

Trust range, are based on original colours made according to traditional formulations, and come with intriguing and often eccentric names: Mouse's Back, Lamp Room Grey, Dead Salmon, and Bone, to name just a few. People either love them or loathe them; they eulogise about their Lime White or Octagon Yellow, or complain how dull and drab the colours are. The chic but pricey (£6) colour chart comprises 35 samples hand-painted on card in soft chalk emulsion, with brief histories of the colours.

Farrow & Ball is not the only company to be enjoying success with traditional colours. Dulux, following its lead, launched a rival collection

three years ago. Called simply the Heritage Collection, it consists of 160 or so colours organised into three

palettes: Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian & Art Deco. As with Farrow & Ball, Dulux created its collection from original recipes and archive colours. Because it spans several centuries, there is a greater tonal variety within the range, and it is the brighter, Victorian section of Dulux's colour chart that has proved really popular. This year has seen soaring interest in all yellows and Picture Gallery Red (a strong, gingery red), although Dulux Heritage White remains the best-seller.

You could be forgiven for thinking

that magnolia had acquired a new lease of life as a fashionable colour

for the discerning, rather than being merely a popular choice for the unimaginative. There are currently a number of "whites" available under the heritage and lifestyle banners, such as New White (Farrow & Ball), Dune White (Ralph Lauren) and Heritage White (Dulux), which look very much like magnolia and are selling well. But if you have just painted your sitting-room in one of the above colours, don't panic: You haven't been labouring under a misapprehension; none of these is the true magnolia, which in fact has a British Standard

number.

Yet almost all paint manufacturers, whether they have been using traditional, lifestyle or heritage marketing strategies, have reported an increased interest in colour (which should please Benetton) and yellow is strongly tipped to become the next magnolia.

United Colors of Benetton paints

£11.95 for 2.5 litres, available from

B&Q; call 0181-466 4166 for details

of your nearest branch. Farrow &

Ball estate emulsion, £16.99 for 2.5

litres, free delivery in mainland

Britain; call 01202 876141 for near-

est stockist and mail order; also

available at Homebase. Ralph Lau-

n paint can be ordered through

the Bond Street store; call 0171-491

4467. Dulux paints £13.99 for 2.5

litres; call 01753 550 555.

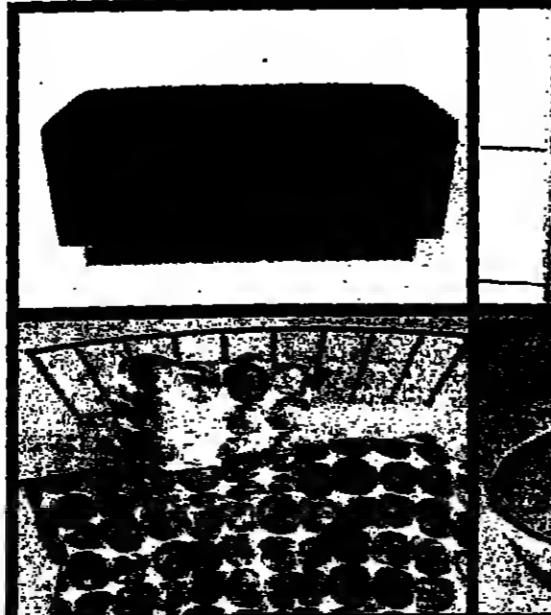
Summer bargains on the home front

Whether you live in a palace or a pied à terre, you can spruce it up with a little something from the shelves of housewares on sale now

THE SUMMER sale season is here again – so it's time to indulge in some serious home therapy. Furniture and accessories bargains are particularly good this year. The Aero shop sale starts today and continues until 2 August at 96 Westbourne Grove, London, W2 (0171-221 1950). There will also be Aero warehouse sales on 27-28 June and 4-5 July at 46 Weir Road, Wimbledon, SW19 (0181-971 0022). Reductions include 15 per cent of Wave Shelving, which is now £185, £9 CD racks reduced from £65 to £22.50 and 15 per cent off all new upholstery orders, including the Grove sofa.

Meanwhile Dickins and Jones (0171-734 7070) is offering 20-30 per cent of bedding, furniture and glassware, including a Wallace & Sewell tablecloth reduced from £87.50 to £23.

Also starting on 3 July is Graham & Green's sale, at 4, 7 & 10 Elgin Crescent, London, W11 (0171-727 554) and 164 Regents Park Road, London NW1 (0171-588 2980). There are reductions of 25 per cent on Tuscan and Umbria dining furniture as well as on textiles and china.



Clockwise from far left:
Grove sofa,
Aero (0171-221 1950);
Wave shelving,
£135, also
Aero; silver
plated
salad bowl
and
servers,
£14, House
of Fraser
(0171-963
2000);
Cairn
double
duvet set,
£29,
Habitat
(0645
334433)

£2150, Richard Sapper chairs down
from £295 to £295 and an 18-in Horwood
fish steamer for £15 instead of £25.

Also in London, Ciel Decor at 187

New King's Road, SW6 (0171-731

0440) has all manner of imported

French items for sale. A sunglasses

case now costs £7; table mats cost

£9.50 each. The sale will continue

until stock runs out. Three other

sales already under way are Habitat, The Source and IKEA. The Habitat sale (call 0645 334433 for details) started on 18 June and merchandise has been reduced by up to 50

per cent, so you'll have to be quick

to find anything left. Items on sale

include Milton CD storage boxes,

reduced by 25 to £10. Cobalt blue

Bombon vases are reduced to £15

each, and Cairn double duvet sets

now reduced to £29.

The IKEA sale (0181-208 5600 for

details) continues until 19 July. Fri-

ers dining tables are reduced by

£169 to £129. Osterley rugs are re-

diced from £79 to £59. Kopper green sofas are reduced to £199 and fab-

ric starts at £1 per metre.

The Source sale takes place at 26-

40 Kensington High Street, London

(0171-937 2626) and at 10 Harbour

Parade, West Key, Southampton

(01703 336141). It started last week

and continues for four weeks. There

are bargains in all departments in-

cluding jumbo towels reduced from

£29.50 to £14.75, chocolate-coloured

velvet throws reduced by 50 per cent

and pear-shaped vases reduced from £17.95 to £11.95.

Finally, from 11 July until 25 July,

the General Trading Co has a sale

at its stores at 144 Sloane Street in

London (0171-730 0411), at 10 Argyle

Street, Bath (01225 461507) and at 2-

4 Dyer Street, Cirencester (01285

652314). A terracotta garden urn by St Jean de Pois is on sale at £145 in-

stead of its usual price of £195.

RHIANNON BATTEN



Royal Antoinette teapot, £235, and teacup and saucer set, £70, Dickins and Jones (0171-734 7070)



Song de Chine eau de parfum, £15.50 for 100ml, from Crabtree and Evelyn (0171-603 1611 for stockists)



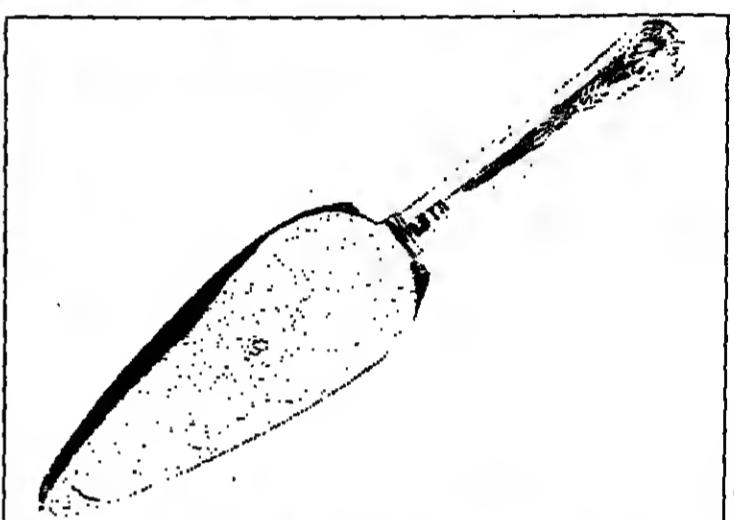
Royal Antoinette teacup and saucer set, £70, Dickins and Jones (0171-734 7070)



Traditional afternoon tea refreshments from 'Marguerite Patten's Complete Book of Teas' (Judy Plakiss, £10.99) (0171-631 0710)



Table, £99; chair, £79; House of Fraser (0171-963 2236 for stockists)



Roberts and Dore silver cake slice, £29.95, Dickins and Jones (0171-734 7070)



White seconds bone china, from £3.75 for a side plate, The White Company (0171-385 7988)



Summer pudding instant iced tea, £4 for 500g, Whittard of Chelsea (0800 525 092)

THIS HAS been an important week for tea drinkers. For hundreds of years, there has been a weekly tea auction in London, where teas from up to 10 of the world's 25 tea-producing countries are auctioned. However, on Monday this tradition is to end and buyers will instead start trading directly with tea plantations or at local overseas auctions.

It may sound like the death of a great tradition, but, Ilyd Lewis, executive director of the Tea Council, confirms that the cuppa is as popular as ever. The UK is the world's biggest tea consumer and 185 million cups of tea are sold each day in Britain. Coffee may recently have become hip - simply note the number of coffee bars opening

across the country - but more than twice as many cups of tea are drunk each day in this country.

These days, the words "afternoon tea" bring a cornucopia of cosy English images to mind - sipping soothingly from china teacups and nibbling on dainty sandwiches in an English country garden or sitting in a quaint little cafe in an old market town with a big plate of scones.

According to Marguerite Patten, author of *The Complete Book Of Teas* (Judy Plakiss, £10.99), the elaborate tradition of afternoon tea, complete with delicate sandwiches and cake, was probably started as recently as the early 19th century when Anna, wife of the seventh Duke of Bedford, decided she need-

ed something to fill the gap between lunch and dinner.

Some of the best accessories for afternoon tea can be found at Dickins and Jones (0171-734 7070), 224 Regent Street, London W1. They can provide delicate tea strainers, whimsical sugar bowls, tablecloths, cake slices; any budding Mad Hatters should pay a visit. Specialist kitchen shops also stock

teatime goods. The Elizabeth David Cookshop in Covent Garden (0171-836 9167) sells dessert forks for £1.99 each, dessert knives from £2.99 and silver cake slices from £1.10 to £2. For something more unusual, Kooks Unlimited, at 2 Eton Street, Richmond (0181-332 3030) stocks Mary Rose Young tea services, £40 for a teacup and saucer; in bright, rose-covered designs, and

quirky Carol Boyes pewter cake slices for £50. For entertaining, Summerhill and Bishop (0171-221 4566) is at 100 Portland Road, London and stocks handmade glass cake stands from £52.50.

If all this talk of afternoon tea gets you feeling nostalgic head to the Bramah Tea and Coffee Museum at Butlers Wharf in London (0171-378 0222). The museum has

exhibits detailing tea production and customs from all over the world, as well as a shop selling traditional tea, teapots, tea strainers, cups and saucers.

The museum is a reminder of the days when everyone would stop for a cuppa, and when waiting for the tea to infuse for the necessary five minutes was the soul of the occasion. A round of tea would be poured out, then hot water would be added to the pot for a second round, and the ritual would begin again.

Tastes have changed, however and recently a host of "new" tea types has been introduced. Whittard of Chelsea (0800 525 092), the high-street chain, stocks all manner of teas, including flavoured green teas

and instant iced teas. You can even buy Darjeeling First Flush from the Margaret's Hope Estate.

Finally, as well as visiting specialist tea shops, there are other ways to enjoy the soothing nature of a good cup of tea. Crabtree and Evelyn's (0171-603 1611 for stockists) Song de Chine eau de toilette, £15.50 for 100ml, aims to create an air of calm and contemplation, perfect for a lazy summer afternoon tea out of doors. One of its key ingredients is oolong tea extract.

RHIANNON BATTEN

The Bramah Tea and Coffee Museum is open daily from 10am to 6pm. Admission £3.50 for adults and £2 for concessions.

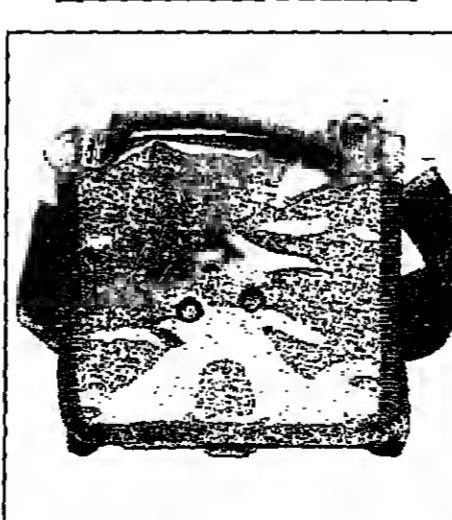
GOOD THING



Good thing
The Pod (left) is a miniature tent designed to protect babies from UV rays whilst parents can relax in the sunshine right alongside. It costs £49.95 (0131 555 1020 for mail order).

Mad thing
ZPM's truck bags (right) can be worn as mini rucksacks, handbags or shoulder bags, and have little toy trucks in different colours tucked away on display behind the front cover. For keeping big kids and little kids happy on their travels, they cost £24.75 from ZPM (0171-370 5556 for mail order).

MAD THING



Same, The Bridge, 146 Brick Lane, London (0171-247 9992)
This new furniture and lighting shop opens on 2 July within the old Truman's Brewery site in East London. All the businesses within the complex are designed to promote a creative environment and Same certainly fits the brief. The proprietors, Piers Roberts and Rory Dodd, aim to showcase designers not usually seen in the UK. They insist that the items they sell must look

SHOP TALK



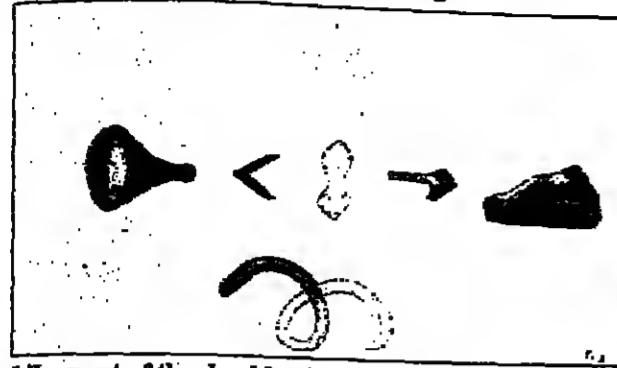
beautiful and also be prodded and laughed at - and should serve a purpose - preferably several. Beds by Müller, £500, can be stacked to create a space-saving sofa; bean bags double as emergency futons; even the shop's floor space is to have a split function. A shiny white space above Brick Lane is to be a gallery for rolling exhibitions.

Prices range from £4 for a candle holder by Leitmotiv, to £2,500 for larger pieces of furniture.

What happens when you say 'kiss'

William Hartston meets an artist with a challenging new theory about language

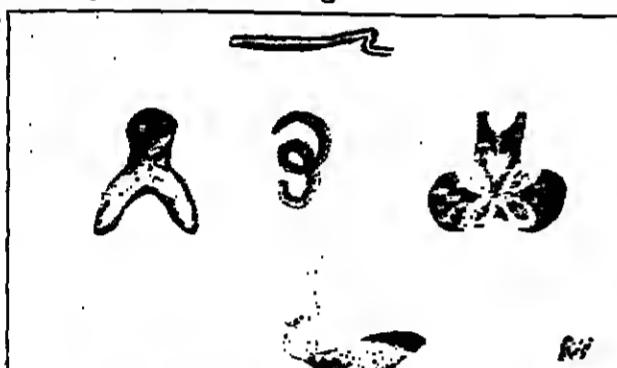
April is the cruellest month, breeding



Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing



Memory and desire, stirring



Dull roots with spring rain

BOW-WOW, pooh-pooh, ding-dong, yo-he-ho and la-la are not, as you might think, an assortment of country cousins of the Teletribbles, though they may have a profound effect on what the Teletribbles say. Bow-wow and his companions are, according to David Crystal's *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*, the terms given, half-jokingly and half for ease of reference, to the five distinct theories about the original of language. The Danish linguist Otto Jespersen (1860-1943) listed the theories, and his followers gave them their pre-teletubbily names.

Bow-wow is the theory that words originated by people imitating the sounds of things encountered in nature. All words, the theory claims, began as onomatopoeia - which is fine for squelching cackles, but is unconvincing for the vast majority of the words in the language.

Pooh-pooh is a more instinctive version of Bow-wow. The idea here is that we began with shrieks and grunts that emerged naturally as signs of pain or emotion. You only have to spit, sigh, snarl and whimper a little to realise the basic defects of this theory: the vowels and consonants of language bear little resemblance to the sounds from which

they are said to have evolved.

Ding-dong offers a rather more flexible scheme: words, in this theory, are based on our reaction to stimuli in the world about us. They are "real gestures" in harmony with the environment. A baby says "mama" as her lips naturally form the movements needed to latch on to her mother's breast. When the same child grows a little more linguistically mature and bids farewell with "ta-ta", she is waving goodbye with her tongue. But you need to stretch the imagination a little in order to fit most words into such a neat scheme.

Yo-he-ho is a more social theory of language development. Early communities grunted together, then chanted together, and the chants became language. The natural rhythms and poetry of language seem to support ideas of such a musical origin, but there is nothing in the theory to explain why different languages ended up with such a wide variety of different rhythmic patterns. Why should distinct groups of hominids have emitted their instinctive communal grunts according to different rules?

La-la was Jespersen's own theory, when he found the others less than convincing. The gospel according

to la-la maintains that words have an emotional rather than functional origin. They stem from the sounds associated not with pain and disgust, but with love play and poetic feeling. But when we say "potato", we are really sighting with emotion and purring our lips to give the beloved vegetable a gentle kiss?

Now, however, we have a sixth theory, which I shall refer to, until a better name emerges, as the Lip-loop theory. It is the brainchild of a North London artist, Ronis Varlaam, and it may be seen as a development of ding-dong. His view is that when early man started speaking, what he was trying to do was to form, with his lips and tongue, the shapes of those things he was talking about. When you say the word "hole", does not your mouth open and extend to form a deep hole, finishing with the tongue flicking its way across the entrance to check that it is indeed holey? When you say "hot", do not your lips extend in imitation of a foot, ending with a neat evocation of toes (or possibly heel) by the tongue?

Varlaam has illustrated his theory with a series of paintings based on his favourite English poem, T S Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Each painting (as illustrated left and below) is based initially on the shape of the lips in uttering a word or phrase from the first verse of the poem.

"As words are spoken the mouth makes shapes as if to illustrate the words," he explains. "Pictographs are created and words become visual representations of their meaning. The shapes on the paintings are transcriptions of the shapes the mouth makes; the details are usually mine. I also use the silent movements that the mouth makes after a word is spoken." He stresses, however, that: "This series is not an attempt to illustrate the poem, but an attempt to reach the origin of the words."

There are four basic ideas underlying Varlaam's linguistic theory:

1. It makes everyone an artist
2. Our alphabet is based on pictographs
3. It may give a glimpse into a pre-linguistic "language".
4. It can be looked at purely visually, ignoring any theories.

Quite apart from the oxymoronic attraction of a theory that ignores theories, the idea of thinking about our lip-loops is strangely beguiling. When I say "box" am I really just opening my mouth with "bo" (like a box opening), then putting

a rectangular lid on it with the "ks" sound at the end? Or is this just an exercise in fantasy, trying to fit the word to the theory? Do my lips, when saying "kiss" form themselves into any more smoothly an arrangement than when they say, for example, "pickle"?

In his notes on the "Waste Land" series, Ronis Varlaam quotes, to support his views, a passage by Siri Hustvedt, writing on the art of still life paintings in *Modern Review* last year: "It may seem odd to speak of images in terms of language. Pictures are supposed to escape the confines of words. But language is the grid through which we see the world and in still life naming is implied by looking."

Whatever you may think of the theory, lip-loop has one great advantage over its rivals bow-wow, pooh-pooh, ding-dong, yo-he-ho and la-la: it is a theory that we can all test. Indeed, we can hardly resist testing it. Just out of range of your eyes, your lips are making shapes all the time. You have probably never thought about them before, but once you do, it becomes obsessive. And if you want to know what someone really means, all you have to do is follow that memorable advice of President George Bush: Watch my lips.

children three that nestle near

Eager eye and willing ear etc,

from Lewis Carroll's *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*,

being a fine example.

The form was known to the Romans and resurfaced when Elizabethan poetasters and courtiers found it a useful vehicle for literary fawning. I found it hard not to curl my lip to Blackadder on learning that Sir John Davies had written 26 acrostic poems the first letters of the lines of which spell "Elizabeth Regina".

Weren't they extinct? The idea of an acrostic - from ancient Greek *akron*, beginning, and *stichos*, verse, - is that the first letters of each line taken in sequence spell out a word:

Breathtaking!
Outstanding!
Spectacular!
Hair-raising!

The acrostic's full floruit was the 19th century, not just as a puzzle - the Victorians loved wordplay (Queen Victoria was amused by them) - but also as a poem: the quirky beautiful: About, beneath a summer sky,
Lingered onward dreamily
In an evening of July-

The two down words are

known as "pillars" in the trade, and the across ones as "lights". Here are the clues to Bradford's puzzle:

PILLARS
142. We shut the light and fly by night

LIGHTS
1. An interjection that may make you start.
2. A feathered foe may pierce you to the heart.
3. A tax off levied on a horse and cart.

I tackled the lights first (I wanted to see the pillars emerge naturally as a consequence of solving the lights), while other panellists more rationally homed in on the pillars, which were, after all, words of known length. Acrostic disposed of, Paul Lamond asked:

P u m P
U gand A
Z eppeli N
Z air E
L astra L
E ar R S
The two down words are

and a listener wrote in with:
Q8: What is the missing letter in the sequence:

A*DFGEJKLM?

(There turn out to be two radically different solutions).

But the acrostic in its quiet way had asserted itself. Next day's postbag plumped with enquiries. It struck me that the acrostic's main weakness - that the lights are of unpredictable length so they flap about, tethered only at both ends - could prove a strength for a number acrostic.

So I designed one that could expand sideways, like a magic trouser waistband, while the legs stayed the same length:

LIGHTS
1. A number
2. Dividing this by 9 gives a 7 followed by nothing but 4s
3. Number having the same digits as 1 across but in reverse

order, and equal to 9 times it.

PILLARS

1. A perfect square
2. A perfect square and the number formed by writing the digits of 1 in inverse order.

SOLUTIONS

- Q1. B o O
A r r o w
T o i l

Q2. E L A S
(If you ignore the 25p piece. But what if you allow the new £2 coin?)

Q3. S (middle row on a typewriter) or C, as the sequence A CD FGH JKL omits a letter after blocks of 1, 2, 3 etc letters.

Q4. 10[9]8
669[9]6
93[9]01

where [9] stands for as many or as few 9s as you like.

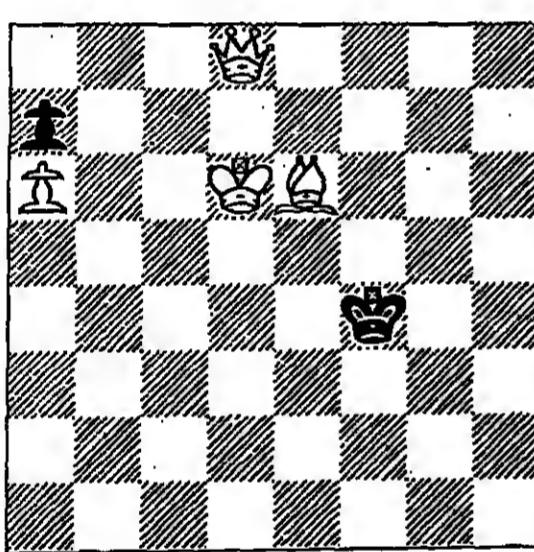
Puzzle Panel, Radio 4 - Thurs 1.30pm, repeat Sun 11pm.

CONFESIONS OF A PUZZLE MASTER

CHRIS MASLANKA REMINISCES

CHESS

WILLIAM HARTSTON



SEVERAL READERS have taken me to task for praising Karpov's final combination to reach a draw in one of the games from his rapidplay match against Judit Polgar. The finish under dispute came from the diagram position in which Karpov, playing White, was a queen and bishop ahead but desperately short of time. Play continued 1.Qb4+ Kg3 2.Qg3+ Kf4 3.Qf5 stalemate, and I had adored White's final two moves with an exultation of exclamation marks.

My theory was that Karpov, as one of the finest technicians the game has ever seen, would hardly have made the schoolboy error of blundering into a stalemate by accident. He must have calculated that he didn't have enough time left on his clock to force mate, so played the quickest draw he could find before he overstepped the limit.

Ah! - my critics say - but the stalemate took three moves to accomplish, while White could have captured the last black pawn in only two; and by the rules of rapidplay, a player with a lone king cannot win a game on time. So if Karpov really wanted to insure himself against defeat, he would have played 1.Qc7 and 2.Qxg7.

A plausible argument, but it seems to me that it missed two vital points. The first of these is that captures take longer to make than ordinary moves. A piece may be alid from one square to another and the clock pressed with the same hand that moved it all in one elegant sweep. To pick up an enemy piece en route involves a good deal of time-wasting fumbling. Stephen R Gould had thought of that when he e-mailed us to suggest that Karpov might in fact, have blundered. He points out that a capture may be efficient, if inelegantly, executed by striking the enemy piece with your own man with sufficient force to knock it from the board. The time lost is then negligible.

But would a world champion overlook such an obvious tactic? I deduced from the fact that Karpov did not plan in this manner that the game was played on a board that had a boundary extending higher than the surface of play. Any smitten piece would then run the risk of rebounding from the edge of the board and colliding with other pieces.

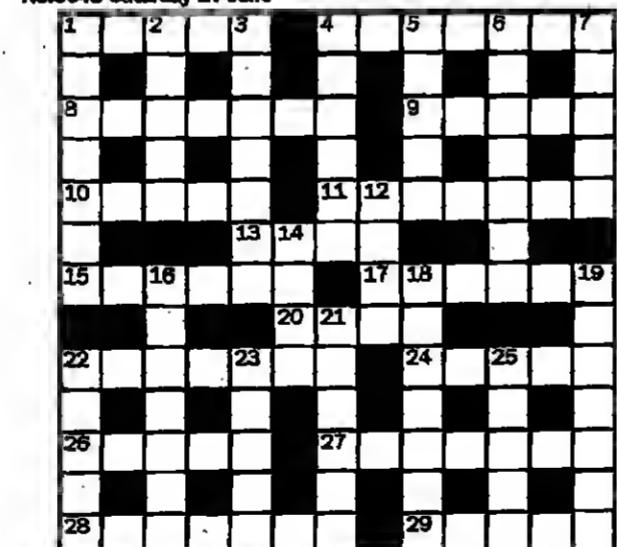
After 1.Qc7 and 2.Qxg7 smites a7, the black pawn, if hit slightly below its centre, will rebound from the side and knock over the white pawn on a7. While White is trying to set up the men again, he will overstep the time limit.

And quite apart from the ridged boundary theory, I think we may also conclude that the clock was placed on the K-side. 1.Qb4 and 2.Qg3+ reduce to a minimum the path between hand and clock.

OK, I admit it: Karpov blundered. He still had seven seconds left at the end.

CONCISE CROSSWORD

No.3648 Saturday 27 June



ACROSS

1. Speaks (5)
4. Terribly (7)
8. Court action (7)
9. Dispute (5)
10. Left-hand page (5)
11. Moved out of (7)
13. Electric cable (4)
15. Confirm (6)
17. Parts of eyes (6)
20. Olfactory organ (4)
22. Relevant circumstances (7)
24. Set (5)
26. Dark (5)
27. Brisk movement (7)
28. Flower (7)
29. Wash out (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Bay, 2 Route (Beira), 7 Cal-de-sac, 8 Bait, 9 Yalum powder, 10 Bruce, 12 Fedora, 14 Benefactress, 18 Area, 19 Obsolete, 20 Hand, 21 Toe.

DOWN: 1 Blister, 2 Yodel, 3 Recap, 4 Unbowed, 5 Elite, 6 Assume, 11 Insect, 12 Fretful, 13 Ricotta, 15 Earth, 16 Avoid, 17 Ezer.

BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

East-West game: dealer West

North
♦ Q 72

♦ K J 85

♦ K J 4

♦ 7 4 3

West
♦ A K 6 5 4

♦ 10 9 8 3

♦ 7

♦ Q 10 5 3

♦ Q 10 5

South
♦ none

♦ A Q 9 6 4 3 2

♦ A 7 2

♦ K 5 2

SACRIFICING WHEN you are vulnerable against a non-vulnerable opponents is always a delicate affair. On this deal from match play, West thought that he had judged matters perfectly, but he was in for a disappointment when he met his team-mates at half-time.

At both tables the bidding started with One Spade by West, a raise to Two by East, and an intervention of Three Hearts by South. West passed, North raised to game and, while one West was content to defend, his counterpart went on to Four Spades, doubled by North. Well, the club finesse was right and there were only two diamond losers, but the 3-0 trump break was annoying and West conceded 200 points.

At the other table, where Four hearts was passed

out, West started with ♦ K. Declarer saw matters in a simple light: he ruffed, drew trumps, and tried the diamond finesse. When this failed there was still the faint hope that ♦ A was right, but it was not to be and he ended by losing four tricks.

The first West's enterprise would have been rewarded if his colleague had spotted the 100 per cent play to make Four hearts (assuming that West held ♦ A as well as ♦ K). I hope that you would have got there.

Try this approach: do not ruff ♦ K but discard a diamond. Say West switches to a trump. Declarer wins in dummy, ruffs ♦ 7, then plays three rounds of diamonds, ruffing in hand. He crosses to dummy with a trump and leads ♦ Q, discarding a club from hand. This leaves West on lead with the choice of conceding a ruff and discard or leading a club. In either case, declarer loses only three tricks in all.

BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY

ONE OF the things you realise after you have been playing backgammon for even a short time is that you can't win every game, no matter how good you are. Not only can you not win every game, but you cannot win even a high percentage of them. An expert pitted against a novice may well win 80-85 per cent of the games but as soon as the novice learns the basics that percentage will quickly shrink.

I have kept records for the last seven years of every game that I have played, either in matches or in money play. Over that period my game-winning percentage is 53 per cent. There are two points to be noted. First, that small 58-47 edge is really quite high over a long period and will generate quite a few tournament wins and pounds in the bank.

The main point, however, is not whether you won or lost the game but what the cube was on when it ended, and whether it was a plain game or a gammon or backgammon. As I have noted in this column before, the doubling cube is the most important and least understood aspect of the game. It's no good winning 53 per cent of games if all your wins are single-point games, while every game you lose is a gammon with the cube on 2. For this reason, it is worth recording (as I do) the final value of the cube and the result of the game - single, gammon or backgammon.

From these simple facts I can then work out whether I am doubling too late (this will show up as lots of single-point games won) or accepting too many bad doubles (this generates lots of lost gammons). Given this information I can then amend my doubling practice and look to see whether this is reflected in my statistics. It can be quite uncomfortable to amend tried and trusted practices, but only by tuning and refining your play can you hope to improve.

For example, I noticed one

Spotting a climate change

The role sunspots may play in determining our weather has long been a source of debate. A discovery this week may shed light on the matter

MENTION SUNSPOTS to any respectable meteorologist and you will be liable to fall under intense suspicion of heresy.

For at least a hundred years, an assortment of non-establishment weather forecasters have advocated a variety of theories linking sunspot activity with weather on Earth. They have generally in some degree at least, been treated as crackpots because of an absence of hard science to back their theories.

This week, however, there has been a sudden change in the scientific climate, for two researchers at Leicester University have outlined theory that appears to support much of what the alleged crackpots have been saying.

The case of the sunspot worshippers has until now been based mainly on statistical correlations between sunspot activity and the Earth's temperature. We'll come to just what sunspots are in a moment.

For the time being, all you need to know is that if you look at the sun through a telescope you will see a varying number of freckles on its surface, caused by some sort of local disturbance. The number of these freckles is called the sunspot number, and it has long been known that the number increases and decreases roughly according to an 11½-year-cycle.

Since the late 19th century, attempts have been made to match variations in the Earth's temperature to fluctuations in the sunspot cycle. It seemed to many scientists that it could not be a coincidence that a period of abnormally low sunspot numbers, from about 1,845 to 1,715 (the so-called Maunder Minimum), coincided with the Little Ice Age on Earth. But arguments have continued as to the strength of any general correlation between sunspot numbers and temperatures on Earth.

A modicum of success was obtained in attempts to make the changing Earth climate fit the 11½-



WILLIAM HARTSTON

year sunspot cycle — the worst droughts in the American West, for example, appear to have happened at the same time in alternate cycles, every 33 years — but the theory left too many questions unanswered. In the case of those droughts, for example, why only every alternate cycle?

The most important objection, however, was an absence of any convincing theory of causality. A sunspot seems to be an area of cooler gas at the sun's surface, caused by strong magnetic fields that block the flow of heat. Magnetic storms on Earth happen at times of high sunspot activity. But although sunspots may involve some blocking of the flow of heat from the sun, calculations show that the effect on the amount of solar energy reaching the Earth would be no more than a change of 0.1 per cent. And that's hardly likely to cause an ice age.

Yet in recent years, new theories of sunspot effects have been gaining ground. The meteorologist Piers Corbyn has been a thorn in the side of the Met Office for years now with his well-publicised bets on the weather with William Hill. His method of long-term weather prediction based on sunspot theories has been consistently outperforming conventional forecasting methods.

Still more recently, three Danish scientists have produced some convincing correlations not between the



Is there more to the sun's influence on our weather than meets the eye?

Earth's temperature and sunspot activity, but between its temperature and the varying length of sunspot cycles.

All the time, however, there were strong grounds for reasonable doubt. The scientific establishment could never convict sunspots of interfering with our weather until an explanation was given of how they did it. And that's what we may now have, thanks to the work of Professor Terry Robinson and Dr Neil Arnold at Leicester University.

They have constructed a computer model of the Earth's climate that stretches far higher above the surface of the Earth than existing models, and takes into account a lot of people have dismissed it as a fluke. Our model has come up with something which might offer an explanation."

Corbyn is characteristically less cautious: "This is great news. It confirms everything we've been saying for years," he says. "I think the forecasting establishment are going to have to wise up."

Caution, however, is still advisable. The recent history of weather forecasting is littered with too many mathematical models that have fitted beautifully with the data of the past but have gone on to fail the test of predicting the future. In the Seventies, when the Earth's climate took a sudden dip into cooler regions, it became fashionable to predict an imminent ice age. Almost any model that fitted the observed data of a cooling Earth would have been bound to do so. Just as the Nineties have been full of predictions of runaway global warming. The test of a

computer model comes not in how well it fits the past, but in its accuracy in predicting the future.

And that is why the consequences of this discovery, if it stands up to rigorous tests, will have far deeper implications than settling an old squabble between meteorologists. If proponents of the various sunspot theories are correct, then recent changes in the Earth's climate may be fully explained by solar activity.

For anyone who thought that Kyoto went too far in trying to restrict the production of greenhouse gases, this new theory provides another potential weapon to their armaments.

The oil lobby will be looking with great interest in the direction of Leicester over the coming years.

PANDORA MELLY

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Ian McGarry, 57, general secretary of the actors' union Equity

MY REAL passion, I suppose, is National Hunt horseracing, but that's much too serious to be regarded as a game. Tragically, I'm now too old to play football, or even referee, which I did for a number of years. It was quite good experience for my job, trying to sort people out, squabbles and the like. But the game that enables me to escape from all the pressures of my daily existence is an old-fashioned game called darts.

I play at my local pub in Putney. We play semi-seriously on a Thursday night in a little, local league; then at weekends we play what we call silly games. I don't suppose you've ever heard of them games like *Halo-ho*, *Overs and Unders* and *Blind Kisser*, all for the amateur state of 25p.

Blind Kisser is where you try to knock each other out, but you don't know who's got what numbers, apart from your own. It's a good escape for me; because the people I play with are nothing to do with the entertainment industry. They're all local guys that I've played with for years. TV repairmen, and plumbers and lorry drivers, and some of them have rather strange names. If you want examples there's Battersea Bill and Big John, Brian the Bump, people like that.

On Thursday evening, you forget about everything else, which is the idea of playing games, I suppose. Concentrating on trying to win. You don't think about love, money or work.

Not long ago, in a game called *Tactics*, I had one throw in which I got three double tops, if you know what those are. I thought it was quite an achievement to get three double twos in a row. Those are the moments when you punch the air, or have another drink.

Darts boards are available at most good pubs. Equity may be contacted at 0171-379 6000.

THIS WEEK IN THE SEVEN-SECTION INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



A life less ordinary

Martha's ashes were strewn on the Thames ... 'Was it an outgoing tide?' I asked her stepson. 'Oh God,' he said, 'I hope so'

Nicholas Shakespeare remembers Martha Gellhorn, one of the century's greatest reporters and most colourful characters

A copper-bottomed week of weirdness

HOME NEWS

North Wales
Plans to build a car park for visitors to the Coed y Brenin Forest near Colgellau have been delayed by ants. A nest of more than half a million of the *Formica rufa* species was found by workers clearing the intended site. Now designs are being reassessed to find a way to proceed without harming the ants, which are the biggest to be found in Britain.

London
The first UK Spam Fan Club was launched on Thursday to provide a forum for lovers of the chopped pork and ham creation that has sold six billion tins since its invention in 1937. A website is planned through which Spam lovers will be able to purchase sweatshirts, keyrings, posters and other Spam-related merchandise. The United States already has a Spamerica Cup competition for cooking-with-spam recipes. Further information from: Lindsey Sexton, Gleo House, 125 Old Brompton Road, London, SW7 3RP.

FOREIGN NEWS

Denmark
Ulla Isendam was fined 300 kroner for putting a policeman's bottom in the town of Hillerød, 20 miles north of Copenhagen. Ms Isendam said that she is attracted to men in uniform and could not resist "his cute little bum". However, officer Henrik Basse was offended and took her to the police station where she was charged with indecent behaviour and injuring his integrity. "I still get turned on by men in uniforms so I guess I can't resist tapping more behinds in the future," she said.

Stories from around the world that failed to make the headlines. By William Hartston

Russia

Sport
Gennady Gorbachev, an electrician in the city of Novomoskovsk, was given a work of art in lieu of 300 roubles (about £30) wages that he was due for part-time work at a children's centre last year. The official Russian news agency referred to the gypsum statue as "worn out" and "a tasteless artwork from the Soviet era" and Mr Gorbachev was later offered money for it. But he preferred to keep it because he likes it.

United States
According to research in California, more airline pilots are falling asleep at the joystick because of improved technology and an increased demand for flights. Pilots have little to do at cruising altitudes on transcontinental flights. Pilots are currently banned from napping or taking mid-flight walks, except to use the toilet.

Czech Republic

Crime
Edward Kremlicka, chairman of the Czech Pensioners Party, has made good a pre-election promise. At the country's general election last week, he said, on national television, that he would eat a large May bug if his party did not secure the five per cent of votes needed to win seats in parliament. His party finished with only three per cent so, at a press conference on Monday, he carried out his promise. "The bug was crawling across the plate, so I bit its head off, and when the yellow jelly came out, I gobbled it and washed it down with Fernet (liqueur)," he said afterwards.

after serving a double fault, the player who serves first is not more likely to win the set, and new balls do not confer any extra advantage on the server.

Texas

Tennis
Three people went on trial in San Antonio on Tuesday charged with stealing over \$10,000 worth of used cooking grease. The defence attorney said the charges are based on false accusations by big companies trying to corner the market in used grease.

Australia

Tennis
Jason Miller, 26, has pleaded guilty to a charge of causing a bogus newspaper advert to be published after he put a fake death notice for his grandfather in the paper as an excuse for taking time off work to look for another job.

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arts

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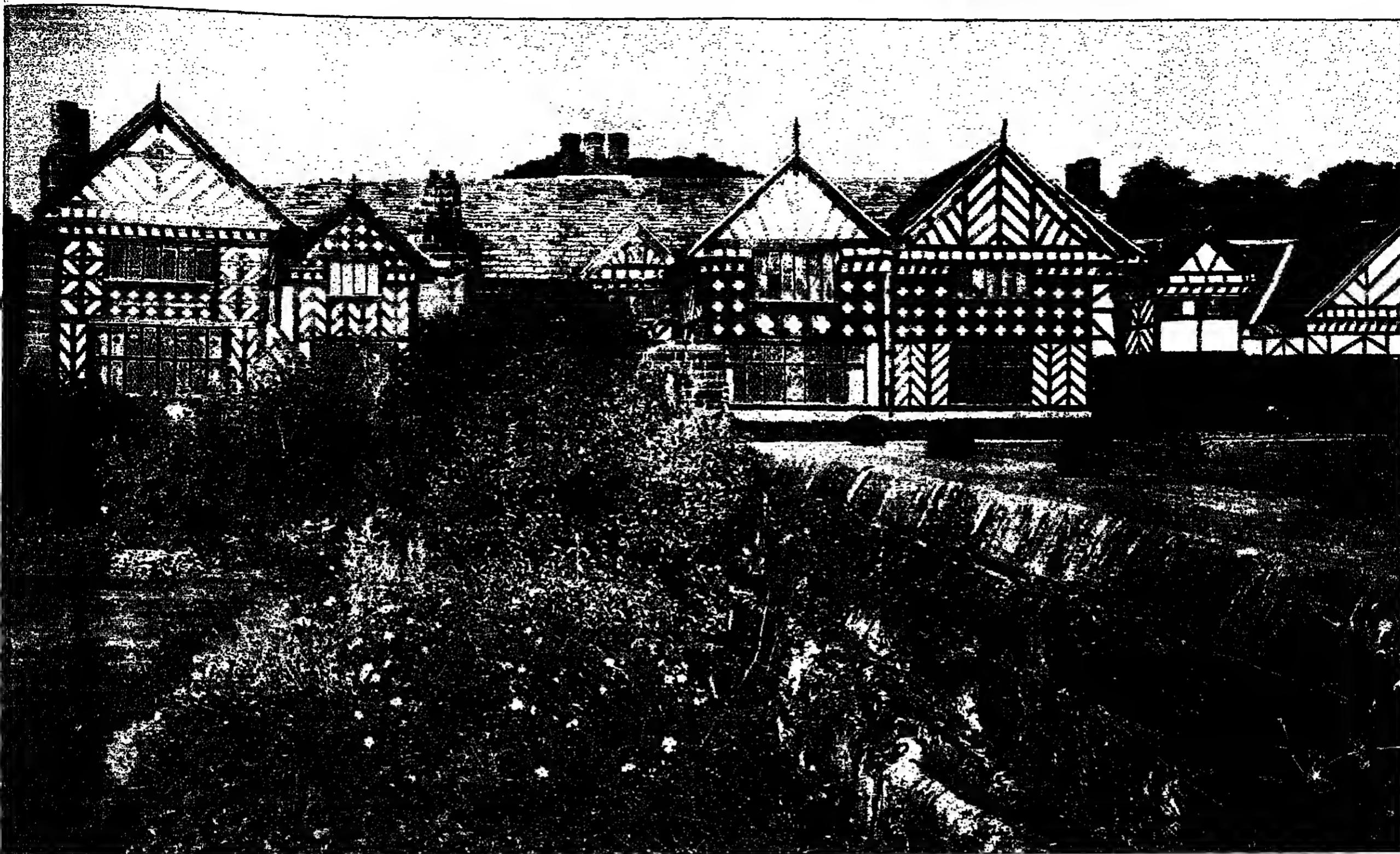
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See page 38

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From the sublime to the suburban, visitors to McCartney's former home at 20 Forthlin Road, below, first board a minibus at the National Trust's Speke Hall, above

National Trust/Rui Xavier

Merseyside maisonettes

Paul McCartney has come far since leaving 20 Forthlin Road, Liverpool 8. Now it's open to the public. By Cheryl Winspear

MY DESIRE is always to be ... In a perfect world, Paul McCartney would have been brought up in Penny Lane. In fact his teenage home, where he moved at age 13 in 1955, was a modest terraced house at 20 Forthlin Road, Liverpool 8. When Paul left home in 1964, at the age of 22, the house was occupied by another tenant who remained in the property for 31 years before she sold it to the National Trust.

His old home opens to the public on 29 July. It could hardly be said to be on a long and winding road, though: the house is in a quiet residential area of

Allerton, just off Martha Avenue, a leafy, wide road east of the city centre. Influenced by his father, Jim McCartney, who used to play the trumpet in his own ensemble, Jim Mac's Band, Paul spent hours playing his guitar and singing.

The house is now being renovated and given the retro treatment back to its original Fifties feel. The double glazing will be replaced with the original windows, and internal fittings such as doors will also be changed. Although none of the original furniture that belonged to the McCartney family remains, the National Trust is



hoping to match the contents of what was there, working from the advice of Mike McCartney, Paul's younger brother. It could be like yesterday.

This is an opportunity to see memorabilia and photographs recording the history of Paul's family life, which have never been on view to the public be-



fore. The family's private moments and Paul's life up until 1964 are dealt with, all captured by the hand of his younger brother Mike.

Most visitors will probably be more interested in the days of singing and playing with the Quarrymen, which he first came across in 1956 at an out-

door party at Woolton Parish Church; early rehearsals with John, en route to becoming the greatest songwriting partnership of the 20th century; and on until after they'd made their first professional recordings with Tony Sheridan on the Polydor label, as the Beatles.

An audio tour will also be available at the house, narrated by the Beatles' biographer Hunter Davies.

Tours will run on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays until 31 October, and then throughout November and December on Saturdays only. Bookings open next Wednesday (0151-486 4006); planning regulations mean a strict limit on the number of visitors allowed each year. The cost of your ticket - £4.50 for adults, £2.50 for children, £1.50 for National Trust members - goes towards the cost of restoration, employing a resident custodian in the McCartney home, and running a minibus service from Speke Hall, a nearby stately home that is also run by the National Trust. The aim is to minimise the impact on other residents, and this will be the only way to get access to the McCartney home.

The Beatles Convention takes place over the August Bank Holiday from 26 August to 1 September; you can book through Cavern City Tours on 0151-236 9091. The festival is in its 15th year and usually attracts crowds of more than 100,000 people. There will be at least 130 bands playing on 30 different stages, some in the city centre and others in local pubs and clubs, plus many other events including a garden party at Strawberry Fields.

The Beatles Convention runs on the final Monday of the month. The new Albert Dock youth hostel in Liverpool should be taking its first guests in a month's time. It is ultra-luxurious by the standards of most youth hostels, and the price for adults will be £15.50 including breakfast.

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A SAFE bet on Monday morning the mailbag will be bursting with letters from readers aggrieved at our running a story today on northern Cyprus.

Even by the lax pragmatism of international diplomacy, the self-styled "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" is a pariah. The government that runs the upper 37 per cent of the island is recognised only by Turkey, which maintains a huge garrison of troops in territory regarded by the official Republic of Cyprus as illegally occupied.

Some readers will insist that by publishing the story, we are encouraging people to visit a territory where property was illegally seized from the Greek Cypriot owners. And they may question our policy of featuring Turkey, whose human rights record is far from exemplary.



SIMON CALDER
i suspect the source of this nonsense is the album cover conceit of printing song lyrics in lower case

Life here would be much easier if we left out stories about contentious parts of the world - and our pages would be significantly emptier. Countries from Albania to

Zambia have dubious human rights records. Many prospective travellers will opt not to go to certain places until an offending regime has been removed or reformed - my parents, for example, persuaded the family not to travel to Spain until Franco's Fascist rule had ended.

The Calder boycott of the costas did not do a great deal to dislodge the dictator; but we tourists collectively possess economic might, and have a responsibility to use it wisely. So while these travel pages are not the place to attempt to unravel conflicts as tangled as the division of Cyprus, I am conscious of the impact our stories may have. Let me know, when you feel we have failed properly to address human rights abuses about northern Cyprus, or anywhere else.

The one country we will not feature on our travel pages is Burma, where appalling outrages have been committed in the name of tourism.

We have no wish to encourage anyone to visit a country where slavery has been employed explicitly to develop a tourist infrastructure, and the Nobel Peace Prize winning opposition leader, Aung Sang Suu Kyi, has asked tourists to stay away.

"YOU WROTE about an incident in Tower Hamlets where a cycle lane was obstructed by a council vehicle doing its shopping," writes a reader from Wiltshire. "That same day, Swindon Council left a van across the outside lane of the local running track - while a 400-metre race was in progress - leaving one very disgruntled runner. I stopped trying," he said. "What else do you do when you come round the bend and find a van in the way?"

The writer of that letter may be a council employee; he ends: "You will forgive me if I merely sign myself An Onlooker."

I'M GOING to go on go.

If that sentence reads

badly, blame the fashion for using lower-case letters in travel.

EasyJet started it: the low-fare airline prefers to be known as easyJet, which is fine except at the start of a sentence, when you reasonably expect a capital letter. Now go - the British Airways offshoot which easyJet accuses of pinching all its ideas - has copied the style on the tailplanes of its Boeings.

Even British Airways

finds its subsidiary's name uncomfortable. In one short article in a company newsletter, the name is rendered as GO, Go and go, before the writer settles on "the airline".

Its rival would rather it emulated the style of the musician Prince, as in "the airline formerly known as easyJet".

I suspect the source of all this nonsense is the old album cover conceit of printing song lyrics in lower-case - I believe melanie's 1969 effort, candler in the rain, was the first of many.

Anyway I'm going to go on go to Copenhagen on 23 July, with an early start from Stansted. I may nod off in the departure lounge. So, in the words of another punctuation-conscious outfit, Wham! wake me up before you go, go.

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Clearing a pathway to Arcady



Volunteer workers are helping to expand the existing network of 1,100 miles of cycle ways, like this one around Rutland Water, to a projected 6,500 miles by the year 2000

Cycle way volunteer camps provide a cheap and soul-satisfying way to spend a couple of weeks in idyllic surroundings. By Sue Wheat

It was a midsummer day's dream. Cycling in the early morning sunshine past hedgerows sprinkled with delicate pink dog roses and bold red poppies, we were in a strange, Enid Blyton-like twilit zone - fresh-faced and ready to enjoy the day. As I freewheeled over a long downhill stretch, memories of perfect childhood summers came flooding back - the ones that lasted for ever and were never spoilt by anything so mundane as rain.

The dream had in fact started the night before, which was spent sipping beer outside the Red Lion on Church End village green, Haddenham, in the heart of Buckinghamshire. Picture-postcard perfect, it was a scene that Americans and the English Tourist Board would croon over: a carpet of thick grass, an ancient church, thatched cottages, and a small pond full of ducks and ducklings flipping their bottoms upwards every few minutes, diving for food.

At the end of the evening, in true summer holiday form, we cycled en masse back to the farm where we were staying, between Thame and Princes Risborough. No frilly curtains and matching towels for us; we were sleeping in a barn - although Kermans and a hot power shower brought us

into the Nineties. But there was one problem with our rural idyll. Although some of our journey that evening had been along quiet country lanes, we also had to hold our own on busy roads, hugging the kerb as lorries thundered past and cars took advantage of the long stretches of open road.

And that was why we were here. Sixteen of us - some local, some from farther afield - were volunteers spending two weeks building a new cycle path that will allow the cars and lorries to have the roads to themselves, while cyclists, horse-riders and walkers ride and stroll undisturbed along an alternative route.

At the moment more than 1,100 miles of cycle ways have been built in the UK - a mixture of traffic-free paths along disused railways, canals and rivers, forest tracks, and increasingly, traffic-calmed urban roads. But in order for Sustrans (the organisation that is building and promoting the network) to reach its proposed 6,500 miles by the millennium, more people

power is needed. As the routes are in some of the most beautiful areas of Britain and there is cost to volunteers except a £15 registration fee and food, it is not proving hard to get willing victims:

Six of our group had worked on the Sustrans Trailblazer camps last year and returned this year as volunteer co-ordinators. "It was one of the best summers I've ever had," says Pip Anew, a 26-year-old lecturer from Hull. "We worked in Derby and South Wales - both really beautiful areas - and we had a fantastic time. Most people go and lie on a Spanish beach for a couple of weeks, but after working on the camps I've realised there's so much of the UK I want to see. Cycling around a place also means you see much more, and living in a community for a couple of weeks getting to know everyone is great."

Everyone has a different story of how they came to be here. For Ted from Colchester, this camp is just one of a series of jaunts he has made since retirement, including a cycling trip to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. For Laura, a student in Bolton, it is a cheap and different holiday. For Andy, 34-year-old ex-environmental health officer, it is a chance to gain more skills in conservation - something he wants to move into, having been burnt out by city life. "I worked seven days a week, commuting into London and getting thoroughly stressed, so I got out. But I decided not to travel overseas - not to run away from things - but to do the things I was interested in my own country: working outdoors in conservation."

I was just there for the weekend, and on the Sunday morning - the summer solstice - we cycled from the farm to the end of the railway track we were to be clearing. This is less than three miles as the crow flies, and as the cycle route will go, but seven miles by road, which is why so many local people want it. The route was suggested by a local cabinet-maker; John Francis, who was eager to cut down his cycle ride to

including a cycling trip to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. For Laura, a student in Bolton, it is a cheap and different holiday.

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work, and have a safe route to cycle on with his children.

Cecilia Fry, an accountant from Thame, is also a supporter. "When I can cycle to Princes Risborough it'll be a great day. My pet hate is having to drive such short distances."

We set to work. One half of the group was assigned to clearing vegetation off the track. After a training session on tool safety, we started digging, sawing, lopping and hacking. In the heat of the sun, three brave workers broke up the ground with mattocks. The rest took the cooler option of working in the undergrowth.

Our task was to divert the track through the vegetation of the railway siding for a few hundred yards so that it did not go too close to the old station house, whose occupants wanted to maintain their privacy. The bushes in the way had been chopped down earlier; so we cut up the branches and arranged them into natural screens and small "habitat piles" for

wildlife. As I left on Sunday afternoon the group were planning their week's work-making bunks (short "sleeping policemen" that force cyclists to slow down at footpath crossing-points), painting signs and helping lay the track.

The evening's entertainment was also being planned. Cycle rides round the local area and trampolining were two activities being mooted. But I got the feeling that the Red Lion and that idyllic village green had already claimed the hearts of most.

This summer's Sustrans Trailblazer camps include converting a disused railway in Northampton (11-25 July); completing an existing coastal route in Sussex (18 July-5 August); building a new cycle path linking two existing forest tracks near Callander, Stirling (1-15 August); building a new bridge and path to reach the dramatic Heligan Gardens in Cornwall (3-22 August); constructing a new woodland path in the Lake District (22 August-5 September); and upgrading an existing path in Okehampton, Devon (23 August-12 September). Contact: Sustrans, 143 High Street, Lewes BN7 1EE (01273 488190).

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A day afloat in the digs of Waterland

The Bronze Age settlement in Flag Fen lives again. By Louise Duffield

IT'S DIFFICULT to take in the size and significance of the archaeological park at Peterborough. After all, you've just driven past some of the most hi-tech installations of 20th-century Britain - including a gas-fired power station. Here, just a few metres away, is the only place in Europe where you can see Bronze Age timbers being excavated, and what is thought to be the oldest wooden wheel ever discovered.

To the amazement of archaeologists, the area was found to contain hundreds of 3,000-year-old wooden posts, which once held up a long palisade and a timber platform about the size of Wembley Stadium.

These posts crossed the marshy fenland during the Bronze Age, and were saved by the water peat that has entombed them. The platform has now been flooded to protect it, but some of the posts are still being studied, and are on show.

It is also fascinating to see a section of the road the Romans built on top of the Bronze Age route.

To help visitors step back in time, archaeologists have reconstructed a Bronze Age landscape, including huts, and breeds of domesticated animal

that," he continued in an enthusiastic flow.

Then he checked himself. "But I have to say, this was not actually one of the most interesting things I have ever done. It was OK. This would be a good afternoon out."

As for those little touches

that can make all the difference to a place: umbrellas are available for visitors to borrow if it's raining. And, certainly for Lucy and her young companions, the animals were a good addition - giving an idea of the sort of stock that was kept on the site thousands of years ago.

"They'd add a bit of interest for younger children," said Lucy. "But I don't think my two younger ones would have appreciated Flag Fen. It's more exciting for children of secondary school age."

The sheer size of the place made a big impression on the two boys who were with her.

"When we first came in it looked as if it was going to be a small place," Oliver remarked. "I didn't think it would be a gigantic park, like a village. I liked the animals, especially Angus the goat. I know people used to live in huts, but I didn't expect it to be like it was. I thought it was just the Saxons who had huts like

for English Heritage members. The Shop sells souvenirs, postcards and a good stock of books. For school groups, special tours and visits feature hands-on experience, dvds and videos that fit in with the National Curriculum.

Flag Fen is at Fourthe Drive, Fen Edge, Peterborough PE17 3JG. Open daily, except 25 and 26 December, 10am-5pm. Latest admission 4pm. Admission: adults £3.50, children/underfives free, family ticket (two adults and three children) £9.50, discount

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Golf is enjoying a renaissance. Get a number five iron in your hand, and you will find out why. By Gerard Gilbert

A driving passion

"GOLF LIKE measles, should be caught young, for if postponed to ripe years, the results may be serious" - PG Wodehouse.

It's official. Golf is not the new rock'n'roll. I have it on no less an authority than Chris Evans himself. "Rock'n'roll is the new rock'n'roll; it's never gone away," says the Virgin Radio boss loyally when I ring to ask him about taking up the game.

"Yes, but, you know what I mean ... All these trendy pop folk suddenly have a bag of clubs under the stairs: Robbie Williams, Keith from Prodigy, Nicky from the Manics, Iggy Pop. What's going on?"

"Pop stars have always played," retorts the ginger one. "It's just that they never admitted to it before in case they got labelled the new Tarbie or Bruce." So golf is out of the closet and out on to the municipal course. Swinging a seven iron and a pitching wedge need no longer earn the pitying looks usually reserved for those who admit to listening to Phil Collins or drinking Malibu. And, anyway, football is the new rock'n'roll - and all foot-balls play golf. Just the other

week, we saw the England team relaxing at La Manga golf resort in southern Spain.

I suggest another theory to Chris Evans: that men are genetically programmed to play golf at a certain age. But he's having none of it. "Young people have always played," says a man who was playing in the Junior PGA when he was 14.

However, according to Mike Round at the Golf Foundation, fewer and fewer young people are taking up golf. The growth area is in the over-55s. "The game is growing old," he says, which is why the Golf Foundation has opened 223 "starter centres", where under-18s can be encouraged to learn the game. British golf's new young hope, Lee Westward, is a product of the scheme.

But let's suppose that you are over 18 but certainly under 55. You've dealt with the image problem. So how do you get started? "Just buy one club - a five, six or seven iron - go into a field and start swinging it," suggests Chris Evans, whose TV programme about the game, *Tee Time*, has been overwhelming viewers recently. "Don't go straight out and buy 15 brand-new clubs and a load of brand-new balls," advises

Evans. "You'll just get depressed as hell and never play again, and that's a load of money down the drain."

Which is just exactly what I did. I bought 15 brand-new clubs and a load of new balls and got depressed as hell.

I did play again. And again, and again. Now, I'm afraid to say, a Sunday is a very sad Sunday if I'm not propelling chunks of Richmond Park into the air and swearing blue murder at a dimpled white plastic thing.

In fact, I am probably a textbook case of how not to learn golf. I hacked my way round the courses of suburban London with a pair of equally smitten friends before I admitted that I needed help.

Golf lessons are expensive - they cost about 50p a minute - but worth every penny. The admirably laid-back Nick at the Duke's Meadows club in Chiswick (which has the advantage - in winter - of having a floodlit driving range) took apart my grip, stance and follow-through and then put them back together in a form that wouldn't have disgraced St Andrews.

There was the added frisson that two of Nick's other pupils were the Chelsea stars Gianluca Vialli and Gianfranco Zola. Just to think that the hand that corrected the position of my right foot, also corrected the position of the right foot which scored the winning goal in this year's European Cup Winner's Cup Final ...

But back to dull reality - and driving-range practice is a must. A bucket of 50 balls costs about £2.50 and you don't have to worry about losing them - which is one of the main expenses of the novice golfer trying to get round 18 holes.

And if you do feel ready to venture out into life's great fairways, a spot of insurance while you're still flailing about in the undergrowth won't go amiss. If your drive lands on the head of a passing merchant banker who won't be able to work for the following six months as a result, you're likely to be even severely out of pocket. If your usual insurance broker won't cover you, there are specialist golf insurance agencies, Golf Plan being a popular one.

And worry of any kind is the enemy of golf. Or as Walter Hagen, who was the Tiger Woods of his day, put it. "Never hurry, never worry, and always remember to smell the flowers along the way."



The great golf revival: attracting the likes of Iggy Pop, Keith from Prodigy and Chris Evans

Tony Stone Images/Rob Stratton

Scotland's secret gems

Can't afford Gleneagles? No need to fret. The best course is probably one you have never heard of. By James Cusick

YOU WANT to see art in Paris? You go to the Louvre; you walk past the Musée Rodin. You want to visit London? You go to see the Tower; you miss out Dr Johnson's House. You want to play golf in Scotland? You go to St Andrews and Gleneagles and you miss - well you just miss out, really.

The tried and tested route of golfing pilgrims worshipping at the Scottish shrines - the places where you can still see Americans in loud trousers with louder voices and the Japanese preparing to set out on a quick six-hour round - routinely includes the alts of Turnberry, Troon, Carnoustie, Muirfield, and the aforementioned St Andrews and Gleneagles.

In such places, not only will your golfing talent be rigorously questioned, so will your bank balance. Unquestioned fame is a monopoly. There is no Office of Fair Trading for golf, no "Offgol", no government regulator to keep prices down for the devoted. You want to play the stars, you pays the earth.

Fortunately there is an alternative. For the million golfers who visit Scotland each year to play the Royal and Ancient game (half of them from over-



Playing golf in Scotland needn't cost a small fortune - if you head for the courses on the Fife coast

(seas), there are more than 270 courses to choose from. As with the number of bunkers at St Andrews, the number seems to depend on who you ask.

Take away the six superstars and that leaves at least 270 courses, among them a large number of secret treasures that any other country would list in the premier league. And once you leave the holy trinity, green fees plummet.

A round on the famous Old Course at St Andrews (if you are lucky in the daily ballot) will this summer cost £72. But a few miles down the Fife coast, near the old fishing village of Crail, lies the sixth-oldest golf club in the world. For £20 (£25 in week-

ends), you can play an historic links course to treasure.

The Balcomie Links belongs to the quaintly named Crail Golfing Society, which was formed in 1786. The place has a certain tranquil quality about it; usually in immaculate condition and not suffering from overplay.

The links turf stretches along the coastline above beaches and rocks. You play along the coast or, in the case of the astonishing fifth hole, over the water. On a windy, sunny day this tight course will challenge your nerve every bit as much as the temple of the gods up the coast.

If you are content to try out

golf courses of such high quality, variety and accessibility ... and the game should be available to everyone at a price everyone can afford." Mr Torrance, I should mention, was born in Scotland.

Photographs of Nicklaus and Trevino adorn the walls of Ann Russell's ivy-clad hotel, which has been in her family since the Fifties. The dinner, bed, breakfast and golf package costs £247, reducing off-season to £251.

The Ryder Cup player, Sam Torrance, who has travelled the world playing the game, said he could not think of "any other country in the world where you can find so many

THE INDEPENDENT

A nation descends into anarchy

Bigger and better.

No Coco Pops on the Karpas

Where can you take young children to get a taste of independent travel? Try northern Cyprus says Susan Griffith

IT'S ONE thing to be a plucky traveller when you're young and unfettered. But what about when you lapse into middle age, and have children? When I was stopped by the Sigurimi in pre-glasnost Albania, and met Kurds near Lake Van, my twin sons were none the wiser; still protected by amniotic fluid. Eight years later, they have opinions of their own, and I was not at all sure that they could be persuaded to share their mother's tastes in travel. So I decided to take them to northern Cyprus to find out.

After booking flights only, I was alarmed to read in guidebooks that the number of hostels for independent travellers in all of Turkish Cyprus can be counted on the fingers of one hand. So I sent two or three faxes to one-star hotels and within 48 hours had booked a three-bed room in the main resort of Kyrenia for two nights.

As promised, the Sideya Hotel sent a taxi to meet our flight. We quickly spotted Hussein holding a bold placard, though he seemed reluctant to believe that I was indeed the person he was after. Kyrenia is such a small town that we bumped into him on several occasions during our stay.

The call to prayer was being sung in our bathroom, or so it seemed when I awoke with a start at 5am. "Up to prayer, Up to salvation. Prayer is better than sleep" failed to convince me – or my travel-weary companions, who never stirred. When we heard the muezzin's call during the day, one boy suggested it was a prayer to drive away the rain. If it was, it worked, because we experienced perfect weather all week.

Having hired a not-very-flask car at a matching price, we were ready to see the sights. The Byzantine castle of St Hilarion (where some say Richard the Lionheart spent his honeymoon) is commandingly situated on a mountain top clearly visible from Kyrenia. Its dramatically ruined turrets and towers erupt organically from the crags. The boys were impressed by the rumour that Walt Disney had this place in mind when he designed the castle in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

Signs along the steep and winding approach road warn that you are passing through a military zone and are not permitted to stop or take photographs. Predictably, our car stalled just past the entrance to the base. Repeated attempts to restart it prompted a soldier patrolling behind the barbed wire to beckon to a colleague, who within seconds was under the bonnet solving the problem. I was not arrested. I imagine that few international spies



The harbour at Kyrenia – dramatic, pretty and virtually empty of tourists

Robert Harding Picture Library

a great delight to the children – they always chafe against the "do not touch" signs on British monuments. Nobody is around to watch you play frisbee over the mosaic floor of an early Christian basilica, as we did at

Sipahi on the Karpas. In northern Cyprus, you are about as far from a heritage experience as it is possible to be. No reconstructions, no explanatory labels, no direction arrows. You are on your own in

the midst of raw and unprocessed history.

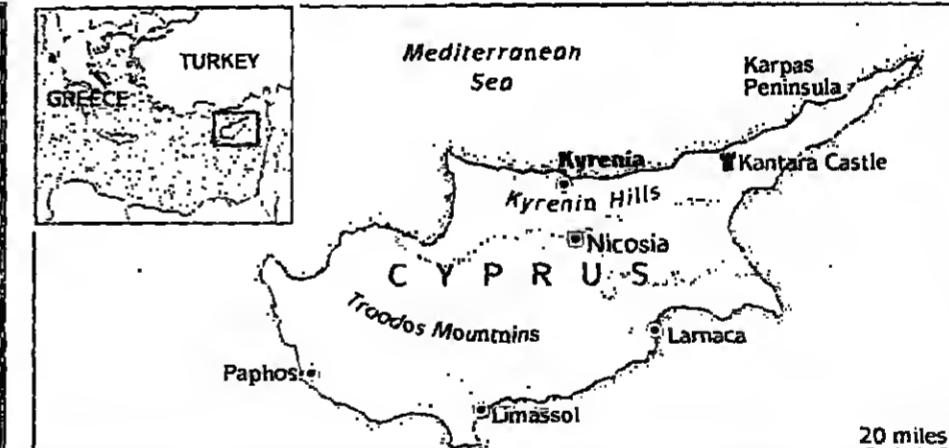
The other side of the coin is that there are few safeguards in this civil libertarian's nirvana. You have to go out of your way to hire a car with seatbelts in

the back seat. No signs indicate whether beaches are safe or not. No fences or walls guard sharp drops. We proceeded to Kantara, another of the hilltop Crusader castles, where the children suddenly vanished. I longed for the presence of a bat-

talion of sharp-eyed guards or fellow tourists. The poor Turk selling tickets from his car (there was no ticket booth) must have trained as a shepherd in his youth, since he bared up the precipice from the back and soon rounded up my intractable offspring.

Not once did I feel that I needed to be on my guard against rip-offs or hard sells, let alone crime. Everyone seems to operate on the honour principle and bureaucratic procedures are non-existent. All transactions are in cash. No one asks to see a passport when you check into a hotel.

The local car hire firm wanted no deposit and simply waived payment for the impromptu fourth day's rental. The laconic fellow in his cubby-hole didn't even bother to check that the vehicle had been returned intact.



20 miles

TRAVEL FACTS

Getting there: no flights are allowed to operate direct between the UK and northern Cyprus, so they touch down in Turkey. Cyprus Turkish Airlines, 11 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5LU (0171-930 4833) has seats at £315 from Stansted. £10 more from Heathrow. Bookings are heavy this summer, so seats are scarce.

Warning: northern Cyprus is recognised only by Turkey. Britain has no diplomatic relations with the north, so consular help is

not available in an emergency. Points in northern Cyprus are seen as illegal ports of entry by the Republic of Cyprus; evidence of a visit will result in the traveller being refused admission to the Republic.

Further information: North Cyprus Tourism Office, 25 Cockspur Street, London SW1 5BN (0171-930 5069). For information on the Republic of Cyprus – the legitimate government of the island – call the Cyprus Tourist Office on 0171-734 9822.

RED CHANNEL

TODAY IS the first red alert day of the summer on the main drag to the south of France, the A7 autoroute. The company that runs the motorway Autoroute du Sud de la France, is warning about severe congestion on the main bottleneck, the 100-mile stretch through the Rhône Valley between Vienne (south of Lyon) and Orange (north of Avignon).

Southbound, long delays can be expected today between 4pm and 8pm, and on Fridays and Saturdays over the next seven weekends until 15 August. Going north, Saturdays

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Choice of Hotels

A choice of hotels is available with this promotion, all in 4-star, situated within a few miles of the resort town of Kyrenia. Accommodation will be in comfortable air-conditioned villa-type units, with private bedrooms, kitchenette and bathroom. Hotel facilities vary but all have a swimming pool, plus a restaurant, pub and sun terrace with sunbeds.



Cyprus

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GREEN CHANNEL

ALMOST ALL the world's airlines have eliminated in-flight smoking, or soon will do – making travel healthier for most but miserable for confirmed addicts. An organisation called the US Coalition for Smoking or Health has come up with nine tips to help them cope:

- Fly in the morning. Studies show that the nicotine craving is worse from noon to 10pm.
- Don't skip meals, but avoid sweet and spicy food.
- Bring along low-calorie, unsalted snacks such as sugarless candy or gum, fruit, vegetable sticks, or popcorn. But
- remember to finish these, or ask the stewardess to dispose of them.
- Consume liquids, but not drinks containing caffeine or alcohol.
- Stretch out the in-flight meal. Pause between bites.
- When the urge to smoke intensifies, take deep breaths and release them slowly.
- Knit, do puzzles, study maps of your destination, or write out a budget for your trip. Keep your hands and mind busy.
- Stretch, flex and take walks up and down the aisle.
- Take a nap.

A plant

An airport in south-east England has just doubled its destinations. The facility in question is the smallest airport in the London area, Biggin Hill in Kent. For the past five years Love Air (01279 681435) has operated flights to Le Touquet Normandy. Now the airline is expanding to serve Beauvais, starting on 1 July and flying on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. The full fare is £250 return; day trips will also be available, giving you about eight hours in France.

A train

The new Saturday seaside special express to Kent is so secret that its very existence is denied by the national rail timetable. Every Saturday at 6.58am a high-speed train sets off from Birmingham via Coventry and Kevington Olympia, destination Margate and Ramsgate. The service offers good connections from the Midlands to places such as Canterbury and Dover without the need to change in London.

A Birmingham-Ramsgate ticket costs £39.50 return. A boat

from London Waterloo via Brussels. Travelling from Waterloo East in London you can also join at Charing Cross or London Bridge), the trip using the train-ferry-train link is under five hours – about the same as the circuitous route from Waterloo International via Eurostar. The London-Bruges fare by rail and sea is only £30 for a five-day return, saving £50 on the lowest fare on Eurostar 10345 303030.

A room

"Coming soon: Van Gogh, Monet, Renoir and Picasso," announces the billboard outside the newest and flashiest hotel in Las Vegas. The Belagio, due to open on 15 October, takes as its theme the towns around Lake Como in Italy. It is rumoured that taxis and courtesy buses will be excluded from the approach road; guests are expected to arrive by limousine.

A boat

Britain's third most popular city break, after Paris and Amsterdam, is Bruges. Travellers in the Belgian city can save substantially by using the new fast ferry from Dover to Ostend rather than taking Eurostar – all for less than £10. That's the

CHECK IN

Name _____
Destination _____

while your car trundles along behind. The new Motorail service from Calais to Florence begins on 8 July. Call 0990 024000 for the Summer '98 brochure.

A month from now ...
Georgian Airways starts flying from Heathrow to Tbilisi, and will be offering excellent fares for travellers planning to continue onwards to Delhi in India – as little as £350 return through consolidators such as Munha Marketing and Leisure Services 0171-287 7186.

A year from now ...
... the last call will be made for sales of duty-free goods before the abolition of travellers' rights to tax and duty-free sales within the European Union. Charter airlines predict that holiday flight prices will rise by £15 as a result. But you needn't be too worried about losing the right to bring back loads of wine and beer from France; the rule change affects only sales on board aircraft and ships. And travellers bound for anywhere outside the EU will still be able to buy their duty-free entitlement at the airport.

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From the thieves' market to fine bazaars, there's a price range to suit everyone looking for India's treasures. Amanda Ball reports

Bombay's antiques roadshow

I BATTLED my way through Bombay's overcrowded Chor Bazaar (or 'thieves' market), dodging the tuk-tuks, cars, people, goats, cows, pye-dogs and hopping rats (though these were hard to spot). Now I had only the dust, the fumes and the noise to contend with.

But this is India, and you expect all your senses to be assaulted. I had come hunting for the treasures of India's past, so I was prepared to scramble through the crowds, where gold and silver merchants ply their wares alongside allegedly stolen cars and bicycle parts.

It's as if the elephant god Ganesh has raised his trunk and hoisted the area with terracotta-coloured dust. I stumbled past the stalls selling pax and little jewels for girls' foreheads, past the trolleys offering puris, past a security guard, through a glass door and I was in another world - one with air-conditioning, white marble and a distinctly Arabian atmosphere, where all that glittered really was gold.

Explaining that I was interested in antique pieces caused bemusement, but finally elicited a trip to a central counter. I was presented with a heavy gold necklace, which fell like tendrils, each piece ending in a cabochon ruby. The salesgirl was ecstatic: "Oh, you simply must have this. This is beautiful on you."

"Well, you couldn't wear it every day, could you?" I said. "Why not?" she retorted. As I would rather people see me, not my weight in gold, when I enter a room, I decided not to buy it - but just for fun I checked the price.

Weighing the piece, the assistant frowned, picked up a calculator and presented me with the figure: 225,000 rupees (about £3,750). Maharani's treasures don't come cheap, yet since gold is priced entirely by weight whether it's a precious antique or made yesterday, I may have missed a bargain.

Along the street, among the hole-in-the-wall shops of the silver salesmen, it's easier to find antique gems. It's worth the hunting to see wonderful jewels and caskets you never knew you coveted.

Many of the gems are tikkas, which once adorned the foreheads of brides. These have now been turned into pendants. Take your pick from the hems of expert stringers, crouching on low stalls by the kerb, covered with every colour of miniature tassel.

I watched as Saleem, aged 55 and cramped like an old tea-bag, but lithe enough to crouch with flat feet on the floor all day, selected a golden thread entwined with magenta cotton and threaded a necklace to fit a tall young Muslim woman in a sash. "See, I can do it double quick," he smiled at me.

The Zaveri Bazaar, part fine an-



Bombay is an assault on the senses and also a great place to go bargain hunting

MSI

tiques shops, part junk shops, is less crowded than the thieves' market. The goods here are not cheap, but you can sometimes see fabulous items that you would be unlikely to find elsewhere, such as Indian lamps and chandeliers.

I'd been inspired for this trawl by a light I'd spotted at the Maharajah of Jodhpur's massive palace hotel, the Umaid Bhawan. In pride of place in the dining-hall is a stylised silver lion sprouting antler-type growths from the sides of its head, the ends of which splay out each adorned with a crisper-than-the-last-coloured glass shade.

India's chandeliers are not spun sugar creations of finely cut, clear

crystal; they are great dolloping dangles of heavily-coloured ruby, emerald and sapphire glass. Craftsmen trying to imitate European styles just couldn't help Indianising them. The results are often garish, overblown, Victorian kitsch - at about £20,000 for a chandelier I didn't buy anything.

In every store I was welcomed like an old friend. Someone asked me: "Look, I have this English painting. Very old. Very big. Little rip. No problem. Repair easy. Nice frame. How much should I ask?"

I'd seen similar in many a local auction at home, not ripped from side to side. "About 20,000 rupees (£330)," I guessed. He looked at me

in horror: "Ah no, I will go bankrupt."

I caught a cab to Collector's Paradise at Apollo Bunder, near the Regal Cinema. Lino floors, plain whitewashed walls and glass cases contain row upon row of old watches, stacks of old Leica cameras (£400), and goods imported from England during the days of the Raj. All of them were more expensive than they would be at home, such as a three-piece silver and enamel brush set at £50. These old everyday items give a nostalgic atmosphere, and among them are some fine antiques. For a more rigorous selection, you need to visit shops in the best hotels, such as those in the ultra-smart arcades at the Taj. Or hunt out

the tiny, entry-by-bell shops such as Heerananeek.

Here, I popped in one lunchtime and found the shop's narrow corridor blocked by the elderly sales assistant, mld-tiffin.

He bought out fine Indian silver items and Raj cigarette cases - a pretty, enamelled one made in London in 1929 for the Indian market cost £300.

Finally, I went in search of bigger items. Antiques warehouses are almost impossible to find, as they are hidden down back streets and are barely visible until you're in them.

I wandered down a quiet, rubbish-strewn alleyway and into a courtyard. On my left was a hovel masquerad-

ing as a first-floor factory. On my right, covered in a thick layer of soot, were laundry lines laden with patched-together pieces of fabric - the sheets and clothes of the poor I walked through a door in the corner and found myself in an Aladdin's cave of treasures.

Diamond Bazaar is packed to its 20ft-high ceilings with old fountains, doors, arches and bullock carts.

Moorthy, the owner, greeted me warmly. "Look around. See if you like."

At the back, a group of men, cross-legged on the floor, were reciting an elaborate chaise longue. They looked up in surprise - this is a place for insiders, a haunt of the trade. Unknown faces are rarely

seen. I came across a witty, foot-high dummy board of a maharajah, £200. Moorthy was enthusiastic: "It lights up. I'll show you." He plugged it in and switched it on, and the room lit up. "Hey presto."

I laughed loudly. Moorthy took one look at my face, and grimmed. This, he realised, I had to buy.

Arrivals: there are plenty of cheap fares on indirect routes to Bombay/Mumbai. For non-stop flights, Welcome Travel (0171-439 3671) has good fares from Heathrow on Air India. More information: India Government Tourist Office, 1 Cork Street, London W1X 2LN (0171-437 3671)

South London turned into Sri Lanka...

In our series recalling memorable journeys, Fi Glover describes the surprising aftermath of a party in Clapham: a cricket match on a remote beach somewhere near Colombo

YOU COULD bear the clamour of the taxi drivers back in passport control, and by the time you had come through baggage reclaim (a loose description) your face would be contorted into a rendition of Munch's *Scream* as you prepared to turn down the offers to ride in every Sri Lankan cab that met the big plane from London at Colombo airport.

Not me, though.

"Friend of Max's... friend of Max's?" asked the polite young man who came towards me as I crouched over my map of Sri Lanka. He could see that this was no ordinary or sensible map. It was, in fact, a photocopy on the back of a party invitation. As most maps should be. I had arrived in the still heat of Colombo equipped only with the following address: Max, Marissa Beach, Sri Lanka.

And it really was written on the back of a party invitation. I can't remember now what the party itself was like, but since it was held eight years ago I should think it entailed cheap wine, expensive king-size Rizlas, ludicrously strong cocktails and rather weak men. Its glamour lay in the fact that Max (the host) was going off to Harvard to do something with his big brain for a year and, between leaving Clapham and arriving in Boston, he was going to Sri Lanka for the summer. He wanted all his friends to join him. So the invitations had that photocopy on the back, with a little dot showing where Marissa Beach was. And it just said "come over", I did.

So there's this lovely Sinhalese man at the airport and among all the clamour he's

asking me whether I'm a friend of Max. So, of course, I say: "Yes - why, do you know him too?" He says that he's in charge of some of the taxis, and that Max asked him to look out for pale young English people arriving on flights from London and point them in the right direction - south-west-ish. Fleetingly thought: murderous, sweet-smiling serial killer who says this to all the girls. But my mouth forms the reply: "Lovely, yup. He's in Marissa's, isn't he? Can I get a cab there? Super, marvellous. Yes, thank you very much, how kind."

The cab driver is equally lovely and we set off in a car that pays homage to a gearbox but doesn't appear to have one. If you take a cab out of Colombo and head south you soon lose the city, and the road follows the coast running between the white sands and the train line. Sometimes you go faster than the train; often you don't. It depends whether you're approaching a chicanee of buffalo.

Five hours later we arrive in Marissa. Now, I had thought on the way down that it might be a problem finding one tall, funny British bloke in what sounded like one of Sri Lanka's finest beach resorts. I was wrong. Marissa Beach is just a beach, and back then Damarka's house and beach huts were the only accommodation available to optimistic Londoners. So we simply drove up to the gate, asked for Damarka, said hello, and at the mere mention of the name Max, realised that we had come to the right place. The taxi driver came in for dinner, and I walked out onto the beach to find that

THAT SUMMER

the party from Clapham had been pretty much transported in its entirety to a perfectly-formed hut, surrounded by palms, with the sun dipping down over a low sea. So it was slightly better than Clapham, really.

Damarka turned out to be a star. He was a tiny Sinhalese with almost ebony skin and the cheekiest grin and dancing eyes that were kept constantly amused by the stream of white faces arriving at his gate. The bloke back at the airport must have been busy.

The cab driver is equally

Max and the rest of the British cricket tour spent the whole of their summer there, but I had to return to my job filling holes in newspapers in a dungeon at the BBC. I wished I could have stayed longer: The only bad thing about the experience was that it made me keen to go to parties in Clapham. But maybe I'm being unfair. Maybe every Clapham cloud should have a Sri Lankan lining.

Since British Airways abandoned its London-Colombo route for the second time, the only airline flying direct between the UK and Sri Lanka does not require visas for short visits.

capitals is Air Lanka (0171-530 4688), which has five flights each way every week. The best ones are on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, because these are non-stop. Lowest return fares are available through discount agents: expect to pay around £550 for a direct Air Lanka flight, about £100 less for a connecting flight on Emirates via Dubai or Kuwait Airways via Kuwait.

Packages holidays are widely available through agents such as Inspirations (01293 822242) and Somak (0181-903 8326). Red tape: British visitors to Sri Lanka do not require visas for short visits.

The old jobs are still the worst. Still, there's no better way to escape the dreadful English weather and experience the "dreadful" Belgian winter. Book by happy-go-lucky first, rather than last minute. It's only two hours and 40 minutes from Waterloo to Gare du Nord, which is in the middle of the city of Brussels.

(There, you're already speaking fluent European). So next time you have itchy feet, don't just visit Brussels for a day, spend the entire weekend and stretch your boredom threshold to its very limit.

Same sea. Different kettle of fish.

Ever wondered why the fish you get in Brussels is so much better than other fish even though they all come from the same source? The plain fact is, Brussels has so many good restaurants, you'll be hard pressed to find a bad one, although in truth, there are a few mediocre eateries where you can spot many a homely English dinner. So if you do, remember to keep well clear.

Funny, peculiar. Brussels is the undisputed comic strip capital of the world. The Comic Strip Centre (for that is the inspired name) stands in magnificence, must-taste-to-be-a-proud citizen. Did you know that Tintin, the Sun and the Moon have all been created in Belgium? Do you care? Anyway, the Comic Strip Centre makes welcome changes from such worthy Victorian tombs that pass as museums. Besides, you will have little or no difficulty deciding whether or not it's art with a capital A. It isn't. It's just good to look at.

The heart of Europe, but you have to find the pulse.

To the inexperienced eye, there's no duller place on earth. But in reality, there are so many things to do in Brussels. You can eat very well, you can drink (very well) and you can live life (to the full). So make a deep breath and book a weekend in Brussels at bargain prices. Then you can see what you've been missing.

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In early summer, the desert is a riot of colour; before long, everything would be burnt off in the heat of a Mexican summer

RHPL; Tony Stone Images

Dolphins at play in LA Bay

Baja California is a rugged sliver of bare mountains and empty beaches. Michael Hanlon hit the highway south with one eye on the blossoming cacti, the other on the potholes, and found a little paradise in the desert

THE BORDER crossing between Tijuana and San Diego is not the place to discover you have a flat tyre. We had been crawling slowly towards the Free World for an hour, stuck in an overheated 12-lane hell. Then the guy in the pick-up in the next lane started tooting and pointing at our grimy car's front end. "You've got a flat," he said. "Thanks," we replied, wondering whether we would make it to the US immigration post. Twenty minutes later, we limped across.

Ten days earlier, we had crossed the same border heading in the opposite direction – in a clean and shiny car. There are no queues to enter Mexico from the United States. No one looks at your passport, and you have to make the effort to find the immigration office to get a tourist card – necessary if you plan on driving more than a few miles into Mexico. We planned on driving many, many miles into Mexico – right to the end of the Baja California peninsula, a rugged sliver of mountain and desert, empty beaches and cactus forests. Time was of the essence: the drive to Cabo San Lucas, Baja's tropical Land's End, is about 1,200 miles from the border. So we ignored bustling Tijuana (a disturbing contrast to giddy San Diego), and instead took the beautiful, 70-mile corniche road to Ensenada, the last town of any size for 900 miles.

Ensenada is a sleepy, pretty little place, built around the bay of Todos Santos and laid out with flower gardens and shady parks. The high street caters mainly for tourists. The shops sell the same things – big hats, carved wooden objects, pottery and other “authentic Mexican” paraphernalia – some of it not even made in China. We sat down for a late breakfast, and studied the map. We planned on spending a night in three or four places on the way down, and having a few days around La Paz at the end. Then we would burn rubber back to the States. No problem, if the road was as good, and as empty, as we had seen so far.

Half an hour out of Ensenada, we started to have our doubts. I had been apprehensive about driving in Mexico. I know plenty of people who had been there, but none who had driven a car. Surely the combination of Latin temperament, Third World roads and dubious vehicles would be potentially fatal.



In fact, Mexicans are probably the most considerate and courteous drivers with whom I have ever had the pleasure of sharing the highway. Pedestrians are waved across; traffic lights are obeyed. Every cross-road meeting leads to an elaborate signing session as each driver tries to wave the other across first. Road rage is not a problem, we concluded, in Baja California.

But, it has to be said, the roads are not good. The corniche from Tijuana to Ensenada is a toll motorway and therefore in excellent condition. Yet for 100 miles south of Ensenada, the Transpeninsular is a nightmare of endless roadworks, potholes and sections too narrow for two vehicles to pass.

The other problem was that despite the closeness of the US, and the beauty of the scenery, there is little south of Ensenada, in the way of tourist infrastructure. The Transpeninsular runs close to the Pacific coast, but not along it, and access to the beaches is down miles of unsigned and bumpy farm tracks. Motels and hotels seem to be non-existent. As we trundled through one dusty town after another – each a string of corrugated iron shacks, shabby taco bars and tyre repair outlets – we began to wonder whether this was such a good idea. Eventually we pulled into the only tourist information office we had seen, a few miles north of San Quintin. We were directed to a motel 15 miles to the south. By the time we

found it, we would have slept anywhere.

We spent the next night at El Rosario, in a strange motel run by Mexican Jehovah's Witnesses, before the daunting drive across the Desierto Central wilderness. This is a remarkable place. South of the army checkpoint at El Rosario, the road climbs to a vast 3,000-ft plateau ringed by craggy granite mountains. In early summer the desert was ridiculously colourful, with cacti covered in red and yellow blooms, and carpets of vivid pink flowers. In a few weeks it would all be burnt off in the 45-degree heat of a Mexican summer.

Here, the road is much better than farther north; it is straight, and in good condition. We clocked more than 100 miles without passing a single vehicle, and were making good time in the race south. We took the spur east to Bahia de Los Angeles, a little village on the peninsula's east coast that was apparently something of a beauty spot. A night there, we planned, then back to the highway.

But as we crested the hill, and saw the Sea of Cortes spread before us, dotted with islands, we knew we wouldn't be driving any further south.

LA Bay, as everyone calls it, is at first glance an unprepossessing collection of single-storey houses and motels in various states of disrepair. Although there is little man-made to please the eye, the setting is mind-blowing. A bay of darkest blue water, set off by multi-layered and multi-coloured mountains, a string of islands and golden beaches. And we seemed to be the only tourists in town. We found somewhere to stay – clean and spacious and just 25 paces from the sea, and set out to explore.

LA has a scrubby but lovely little aquarium (full of rocks, fossils and cowboys' paraphernalia, with a huge whale skeleton outside); there are two shops, three restaurants, a couple of hotels, and that's all.

As the days passed, it seemed as if we had been there for months. We got to know Guillermo, the big cheese in town. A ranchero and owner of the biggest of the three restaurants, he was a mine of local knowledge. He fixed us up with a boat and driver for the day. We knew the deep Sea of Cortes was full of exotic fauna, with dolphins, mantas, rays, blue whales and even the rare whale shark, the world's largest fish, and we were keen to get out and



see some of it close up. We visited three of the islands (all deserted), and swam the tidal race into a turquoise lagoon. No whales, but plenty of dolphins, sea lions and shoals of Technicolor fish to keep us happy.

In the evenings, we ate at the restaurant over the road before the power went off at 9pm, devouring huge plates of mouth-watering fresh sea bass and yellowtail, smothered in garlic. We did once climb a hill behind the town looking for minerals – the place was once home to a mini gold rush – but that was about it as far as strenuous activity went. Just a week after arriving, and it was time to go, but as we watched the full moon rise over the Punta Herradura for the last time, we promised ourselves we would be back.

Getting there: Michael Hanlon paid £221, inc taxes, for a British Airways return flight from Gatwick to San Diego, through Flightbookers (0171-757 2000). Mérida is most easily reached via Miami, or on the new BA flight to Cancún, where you transfer to a bus for a five-hour haul. Mexico City is served non-stop by BA and one-stop by many other airlines; a specialist such as Journey Latin America (0181-747 3100) or South American Experience (0171-976 5511) can advise.

Simon Calder spent an inordinate amount of time and money reaching Puerto Vallarta; he travelled from Gatwick to Amsterdam on BA (0345 222111), from there to Chicago on KLM (0890 074074) and onwards via Guadalajara on Mexicana. You can make the journey much more cheaply and easily on one of many charter flights, mainly from Manchester and Gatwick, direct to Puerto Vallarta. Charters are mostly sold as part of package holidays, by operators such as First Choice (0161-745 7000), Airtours (0541 500479) and Thomson (0890 502550). Some

flights may have space for “seat only” customers; expect to pay around £250 return to Puerto Vallarta. From the airport you can get to the city centre in about three minutes by bus. From the west bank of the river, head inland and upwards.

Red tape: Visitors require a tourist card, issued free by the airline when you embark, or at the frontier if you enter by land.

More information: Mexican Ministry of Tourism, 60 Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 5DS (0171-734 1058). Note that this office takes a long siesta, closing each day from 1.30pm to 3pm.

Designed by the French, ridden by Mexicans

THE FRENCH-designed Metro in Mexico City is one of the modern wonders of the New World. Swift and silent on their rubber wheels, the stainless steel, orange-painted carriages easily cross-cut this vast conurbation of 20 million people, gliding below the choked streets that make car drivers' lives misery. And journeys on the nine lines are cheap: the standard fare for any number of stations is one-and-a-half pesos, just over 10p.

But, for all that it was designed by clever engineers in Paris, the Metro here has been totally Mexicanised, or rather has been transformed into a mixture of what the country is today and what most Mexicans would like it to be. So,

the system is high-tech because Mexicans don't want to be seen as backsliders on the way to the new millennium. Its stations are clean and their marble pavings and walls are polished and polished as though to banish the vision of a land where many still live without water and sanitation. Some trains have Muzak because Muzak is modern. As in Paris, many stations display art and culture because millions of Mexicans aspire to a better understanding of these things.

And ancient Mexico won't be banned. Pino Suárez station, near the city's main square, has been carefully built around the lovingly protected remains of the main temple of the Aztecs, whom the Spaniards con-

quered when they arrived here in 1519.

In a country where millions still can't read, each station has a symbol as well as a written name. The Airport station has its little aircraft symbol, as you would expect. But some are more sophisticated: the Montezuma station has a representation of the Aztec emperor's feathered headdress; the Zapata station has a symbol of the massive hat of the famous revolutionary Emiliano Zapata; the sign for Ethiopia station is a lion's head, symbol of the em-

perors of Ethiopia, lions of Judah. And so on. It is almost impossible to get lost on the network.

In recent years a change has come over the Metro. Financial crises have hit the poorest Mexicans and today there are beggars and hustlers on the lines who were never to be seen when the system first opened. As in above-ground Mexico City, they come in all sorts: small children selling sweets and cheap fountain pens; blind beggars singing solo above the hum of the train

or going from carriage to carriage with guitars and portable electronic keyboards and often travelling in pairs.

On the line to the university the other day, I saw a fierce young man with steel-rimmed glasses and a Trotsky beard shouting the merits of his paper whose headlines were extremely derogatory to the government. He reminded me of the Mexican left, which has a proud, but not always effective, place in Mexican politics. Perhaps it was a coincidence but we had just passed through

Coyoacán station, which serves the house, now turned into a museum, where the Russian revolutionary lived in exile until he was killed with an ice-pick Stalin's orders in 1940.

Ten minutes away, at the Hidalgo station on the same line, religious Mexico is powerfully present in the Metro. Some months ago devout Mexicans saw a likeness of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the country's patroness, appearing in the concrete in the tunnel. That piece of concrete has been quarried from the wall by cour-

tesy of the Metro management and is now on display on the pavement above ground at one of the city's busiest crossroads. All day, a quiet crowd of worshippers line up at a makeshift shrine to kiss the foot-high image of La Guadalupe, who first appeared to a peasant on a hill to the north of the city in 1531. Godless Trotsky isn't allowed to have it all his own way, you know.

Meanwhile, the management makes its own genteel effort to decorum. Between 6pm and 9pm in the busiest stations some passageways are reserved for women, thereby freeing them from the groping of Mexican males.

Despite the fact that uniformed and plain-clothes police

are constantly on patrol, one sad manifestation of present Mexico occasionally comes to the Metro: armed robbery. If you are unlucky, someone will stick a knife in your ribs and ask you quietly for your money. The locals say that it's much better to yield to them gracefully. It tends to avoid unpleasantness.

Middle-class Mexicans are horrified if a visitor does decide to take the Metro, and forecast terrible things if he or she does it again. "But," says Ron Buchanan, a local editor, "there's probably a good dose of snobbery in their thinking. The middle class don't like being with poor people. They want a public transport system of their own."

Mexico City's underground is a mix of Paris design, high-tech and the country's past and present. By Hugh O'Shaughnessy

Riding high on a Mexican wave

Candida Lloyd raises her margarita to Mexico's spectacular Yucatán peninsula and its historical capital, Mérida

SUNDAY IS show time in Mérida. The city's hot, traffic-clogged central plaza becomes transformed into a carnival. Flags, gaudy bunting and ticker-tape are strewn throughout the square. The owner of a doughnut cart uses a trombone-like contraption to squeeze out rings of sticky goo to be dropped into sizzling oil. Old women and young men queue to sit at makeshift caffs and eat warm tortillas stuffed with blackened turkey, refried beans, and chilli salsa. Pineapples are pulped; bags of nuts and brightly coloured sweets are chewed. Middle-aged men in their Sunday best sit on benches to gawk as young couples hold hands and drink Coke. There is music and dance and everyone promenades. Even the more gruesome-looking beggars are out in force, competing for compassion with the nuns at the entrance of the cathedral that stands so severely at one end of the square.

Plaza Mayor, which is flanked by some of the city's oldest and most impressive buildings, is closed off to traffic on Sundays, except for horse-drawn buggies and tourists riding in cycle rickshaws.

Mérida is the capital of the state of Yucatán, in the far east of Mexico. The Maya people have survived invasion, enslavement, disease and oppression and make up a substantial part of the population. Situated in the north east of the flat Yucatán peninsula, this can be a stop-off from the Caribbean beaches several hours away, and is close to the world-famous Mayan Indian ruins at Chichén Itzá and Uxmal. It is a city of narrow streets, shady squares, hidden courtyards, crumbling colonial buildings, noise and dirt.

The Yucatán has a distinct culture, sense of pride and political identity. The original Maya city of Tho - where Mérida now stands - was conquered by the Spanish in 1542. The conquistadores held on to their colonial capital until the mid-19th century. At the turn of this century, merchants who had grown rich on the trade in sisal rope brought great wealth to Mérida. The city retains a European feel, with many of the older buildings built from French bricks and tiles, brought over as ballast in trading ships. The area remained cut off from the rest of Mexico until road and rail links were built in the Sixties. Today, the wealth has evaporated, but the city is still full of energy.

Child beggars are common. Many are ingenious. One 12-year-old boy



The distinctive culture of the Yucatán is captured in the laid back, party atmosphere of the capital Mérida

RHPL

challenged us with a wooden pyramid puzzle. When we failed to reassemble it, he offered to sell a packet of chewing-gum for the equivalent of 2p (we bought a large chunk of his stock). Other children, some so young that older brothers and sisters have to carry them around, live and work in and around the city squares.

You can hardly avoid them as you explore the place, and it's an easy city to get around by foot. We stopped occasionally, escaping from the heat and dust to have a cold beer and a spicy salsa, or to dive into a juice bar to choose from a selection of exotic pulverised fruits and vegetables.

A contrast to the cool squares and many of the hotel's beautiful, if slightly faded, antechambers is the city's gigantic main market. A fog of noise and odours pours from the many entrances. The market is divided by narrow, dark walkways. Sacks of spices are piled next to TV and radio repair stalls. Nearby, squat women knead dough to be transformed into sacks of warm tortillas via a mini-furnace and a conveyor belt - a bit like a scene from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. In another section, there are cramped caffs where large, blackened turkeys are shredded by hand for the obligatory tortillas and beans.

A 10-minute walk takes you to the tranquil courtyard of the new Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Artesano de Yucatán, which is supposed to be the finest art museum in the state. It does not appear to be the most popular. On our visit, there were more guides than guests, with smiling attendants holding open the door to each gallery. It contains

works by well known artists from Yucatán, as well as a room of copies of European modern masterpieces. But the most interesting exhibition is one of Mexican families at home. The ethnic mix is startling - from blond, lightly tanned city dwellers standing proudly in front of a new settee and video, to intensely dark-skinned Mayan Indians in mud huts.

Much of this seemed a faint cry from Mérida's grander past. Close to the city's main square, near to Parque Hidalgo, is a clutch of colonial hotels. Posada Toledo is one such building, a beautiful 19th-century structure with an exquisite courtyard. The owner showed us the hotel's bridal suite, which had been

beautifully restored with fine mouldings and antique furniture. There was even a second room leading from the bedroom, where the relatives of the newly married couple would stay: an instant passion-killer. The owner said she was worried about offering the room for rent because it was so expensive: it cost about £17 a night.

The night-life, meanwhile, is hot and humming. There are restful bars, noisy caffs and traditional Mexican restaurants. Everything is done with smiles, bowls of hot salsa and tortilla chips, and good grace.

And, of course, a few hours out of town lie some of the country's

most spectacular Mayan sites. To get there, you can take the second-class coach service that rattles through dusty villages, each clustered around its own enormous church, where young men selling fruit and flavoured ices leap aboard at each stop. If you have less time, and more money, there are fast, cheap, air-conditioned first-class coaches.

Alternatively, a coach will whisk you to the coast in about four hours. If you like eating at beach bars while downing margaritas as big as goldfish bowls, and have a penchant for Caribbean seas and sand, then the laid-back resort of Playa del Carmen is heaven.

Gone for a Burton in Puerto Vallarta

Casa Kimberley hasn't changed since 'The Night of the Iguana'. Simon Calder samples Taylor/Burton chic

"LIZ AND Dick have popped out for a while, but it looks as if they'll be back soon. Meanwhile, you're welcome to make yourself at home and poke about. And would you like a drink?"

When you visit the former home of Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, Nina Diebold says only the last sentence of that paragraph. But, given the astonishing state of Casa Kimberley, you would not be at all surprised if the actors, so united and divided by passion, were to walk up the stone stairs and into the huge lounge/verandah/bar that looks out over Puerto Vallarta.

The beaches hereabouts comprise regulation pristine hectares of white sand, brushed but not beaten by the Pacific. So only a few visitors haul themselves up the sharply sloping cobbles to a hacienda by the name of Casa Kimberley. You can't miss the bright pink motorbridge placed as daintily as possible across Calle Zaragoza. This was a later addition when Burton decided they needed a swimming pool and promptly bought the house across the road.

The couple first came to this point on Mexico's Pacific coast before they were married, and before it had become a popular resort. The director John Huston summoned Burton here (Taylor accompanying him) to make

The *Night of the Iguana* - a love quadrangle including Burton, Ava Gardner, Deborah Kerr and Sue Lyon. If you don't know the film before you come to Puerto Vallarta, you will by the time you've been here a day.

Hollywood created the resort at the same time as it made the film.

When Huston's raft of talent drifted 1,000 miles down the Pacific coast from California, the paparazzi followed in its wake - not least because Liz and Dick were on the brink of becoming an item.

On slow days, of which there are many in the languid, sultry summer this far south, those involved in making the movie and those who merely stopped at the coat tails and costumes could look out around the Bahía de Banderas (seventh-largest bay in the world, as you're sure to be told) and wonder at their good fortune. It's a jolly, if back-of-beyond, port protected in a relaxed sort of way by a fine arc of sand, with some monumental mountains in the background.

Richard Burton was hooked. It's fair to assume that he set out, when the cloying humidity of summer had eased, to find the villa with the finest view in Vallarta. That, at any rate, is what he bought in October 1964. And that is the place which,

after two marriages, two divorces and the funeral of her former husband, Miss Taylor sold lock, stock and photograph album. So you get an intensely personal insight into the life of a British couple who commuted between glamorous Hollywood and prosaic Puerto Vallarta, where their house stood close to the Mercado Municipal.

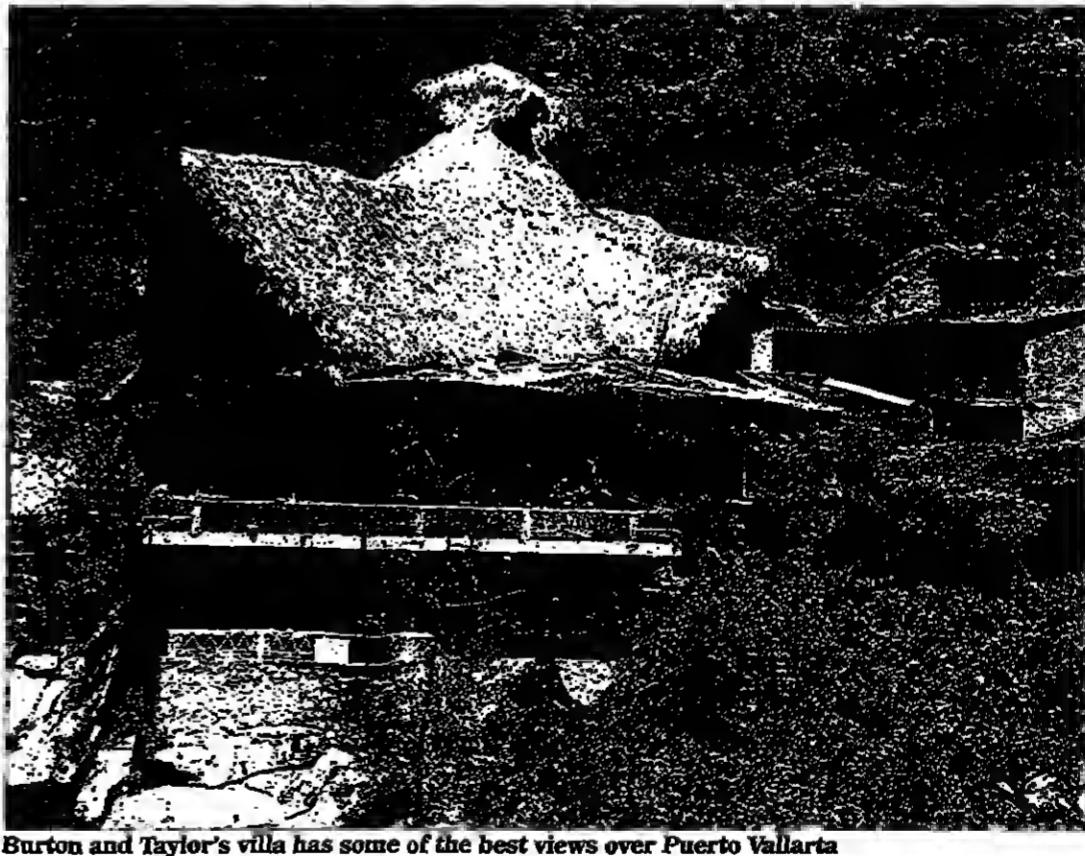
A poster publicising the screen version of Tennessee Williams's short story proclaims they "devour life". Part of this feast was the conspicuous consumption of some truly tacky furnishings, with violently purple cushions covering most soft surfaces. "Suggested for Mature Audiences", continues the billing.

The watershed of your \$5 tour

around the house is in the bathroom of the penthouse - a veritable crater of a bath, in a place amalgam of marble and plaster. If you're wondering where the makers of the ill-fated serial *Eldorado* got their ideas, look no further. But instead of sneering at the Burtons' taste, you can live it: the house is a strange combination of tourist attraction and working apartment complex. You can rent the penthouse, including bath and rather too many faded monochrome prints of the former owners, for £90 a night in high season.

Budget travellers can choose from rooms ranged around the pool or the courtyard. No numbers: each is named after a film in which one or both of them starred. The Taming of the Shrew is next-door to The Comedians and opposite Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf. Each is fitted with a professional make-up mirror and lighting arrangement for prospective stars. Coming to stay entitles you also to play pool and table tennis where the Burtons did, and read their junk novels, which line the shelves in every room. This attention to humdrum detail sums the place up, but also touches a romantic nerve in even the cynical visitor: off-screen love just cannot match the real, steamy thing, but here's how Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton tried. This is a *hacienda de amor si ever I saw one*.

Casa Kimberley, Calle Zaragoza 445, Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco 48300, Mexico; tel/fax 00 52 322 21336. Tours \$5 (£3). Bed and breakfast rates depend on season - November-May is high, June-October low - and the accommodation. A poolside suite costs \$75 (£45) per night in low season; the penthouse suite costs \$150 (£90) per night in high season.



Burton and Taylor's villa has some of the best views over Puerto Vallarta

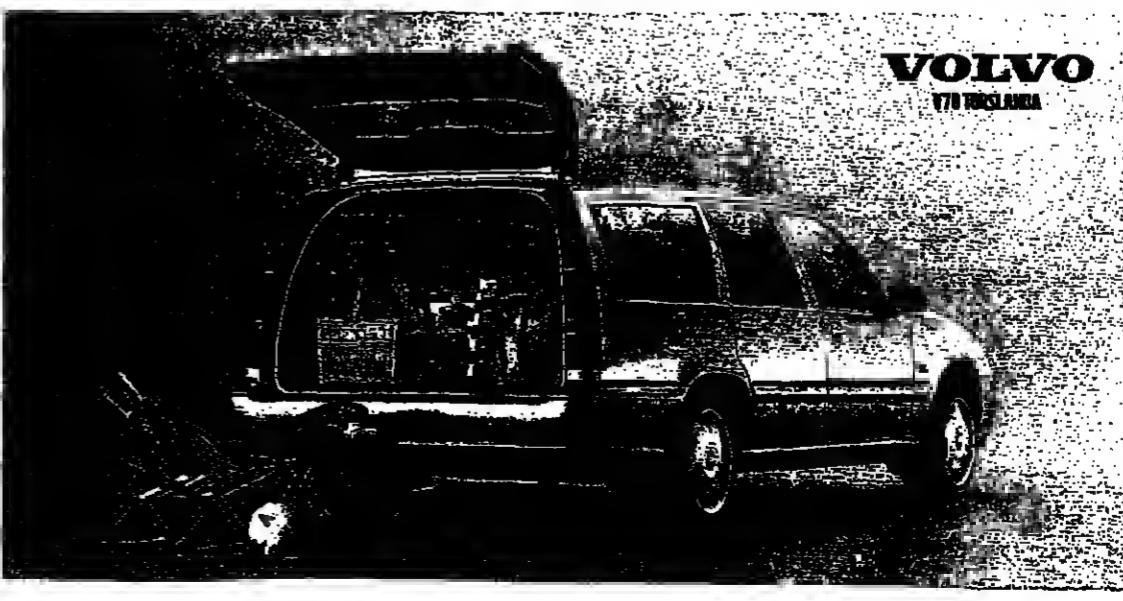
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TRAVEL

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Danger: human crocs

Queensland is no place for wimpy feminists or anyone scared of Crocodile Dundee. By Annie Caulfield

Before I went to Australia I imagined that films set in that country were pure fiction and that Castlemaine XXXX ads were playing on a stereotype of an outback male who no longer really existed. I don't think I really imagined that far north Queensland would be all motorways, cappuccino bars and poetry readings, but it still came as a shock to find Crocodile Dundee and squid bars full of unshaven men in singlets. And no roads.

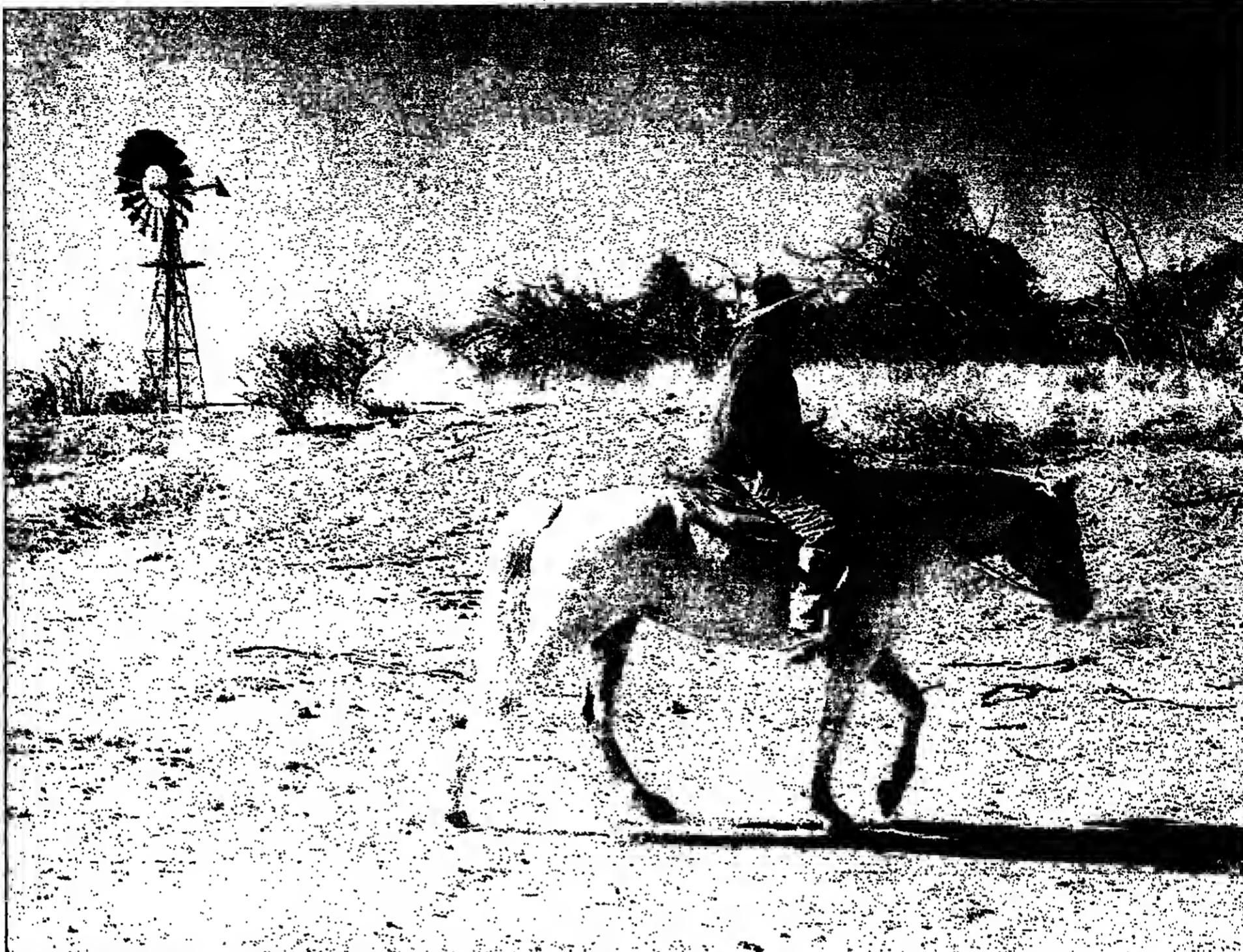
Until recently, Queensland had a spectacularly corrupt state governor; the hundreds of miles of dirt tracks are blamed on him. But I think the men of the region rather like it that way; they get to roar about in four-wheel drives and brag about how they made it through some seemingly impassable swamp to get to the pub.

The other thing they like is the fact that the coastline is a snap with killer crocodiles. I found this a little inconvenient myself, because there are miles of beautiful unspoilt beaches. I was told at least a thousand times as I set off on a shoreline walk: "watch you don't swim; there's a whole heap of crocs around." I don't know whether "heap" is the correct collective noun for crocodiles, but they seem to think it is in Queensland. I'd also think a crocodile would eat you, kill you or perhaps just bite you, but no - a crocodile will "take" you.

Nevertheless, I tried to close my mind to crocodiles - and besides, as an obvious pom, I had enough trouble with some of the people.

In one very small town, I decided to send some postcards. I'd already sent a parcel from the post office and had noted that the sour, surly man behind the counter didn't like the look of me at all. As he'd weighed and stamped my parcel he'd glowered at me, while I'd remained pleasant, polite and blatantly English. As I stood in the queue with my postcards I knew that he and I were never destined to be friends.

I turned against him even more as he served the customer in front of me, a young Aboriginal man who was taking



Men in Queensland like the lack of roads: difficult terrain gives them a chance to show their machismo

Popperfoto/Reuters

some of his own money out of his own post office account.

"You've spent 300 dollars in one day."

The Aboriginal just stared at him. Didn't even flinch. The official slammed down the young man's withdrawal, and

started talking to his assistant before the customer was even out through the door. "Look at that. I bet he drank all that money, and now he's going to drink the rest of it."

I wished I were braver; I wished I had the guts to say:

"Perhaps he had bills to pay, and even if he did drink it, what's it to you? It's his money. And quite frankly, if I were an Aboriginal in this town I'd drink incessantly."

But I just stood there, shocked by the man's behaviour.

to see whether there was any one who might share a glance of agreement with my distress. But there, leaning against the counter, looking me up and down as if he were appraising my flesh, was Crocodile Dundee.

He had the whole leather outfit, knife at his belt, teeth in his hat and thongs round his biceps. There any resemblance to Paul Hogan ended. He'd a mean, nasty sort of face with too-small eyes, a boor gut and pasty, freckled skin. I scowled

at him to try to stop the lecherous eyeing. He just smirked and carried on. I turned away quickly. The counter clerk was waiting.

I asked him for two stamps to Europe, which he produced.

He then barked: "What about

in pursuit.

A lie down in an air-conditioned room made me feel slightly less as if the whole town were about to storm up the stairs and crash through my door. I calmed down enough to admire the tropical scenery, including a tree filled with noisy parrots just beside my balcony. I told myself that I should be relaxed here, enjoy the remote location, feel more empathy for people who had to live in the male-dominated middle of nowhere. The post office clerk was probably just shy, and Crocodile Dundee was probably lonely, and simply trying to be friendly.

I almost had things back in perspective, when I turned on the early evening news. There was a local item about a dog that had been "taken" by crocodiles on a jetty a mere hundred yards from the hotel. The newsreader introduced the local crocodile expert for comment.

There was the post office Crocodile Dundee, looking tough. "Oh yes, it's only a matter of time now before a child's taken. We reckon this one's a 30-footer. We've been trying to catch it for days, but it's a sly one. Don't you ladies worry, though; we'll make sure your kids stay safe."

FACT FILE

Getting there: If you can travel before the end of July, extremely good value air fares to Australia are available - the normal April-to-June low season has extended this year. For lowest fares, consult a discount travel agency rather than going direct to the airlines.

The only airline with direct

flights to Queensland is British Airways, daily from Heathrow via Singapore to Brisbane. A dozen other airlines will get you to Brisbane or - for crocodile country - Cairns. The lowest fares to Australia are on Emirates from Manchester or Gatwick to Melbourne via Dubai, or Garuda

Indonesia from London to Sydney via Jakarta. Add-on flights to Queensland are available from specialist Australian agents.

Getting in: You need a visitor visa for Australia; specialist agents issue these electronically. Call 0891 600333 for more information.

Getting information: The Australian Tourist Commission (Gemini House, 10-18 Putney Hill, London SW15 6AA) is making telephone callers pay premium rates for information. You can order brochures on 0990 561434, or speak to a human on the 0891 070707 "Aussie Helpline" (49p per minute).

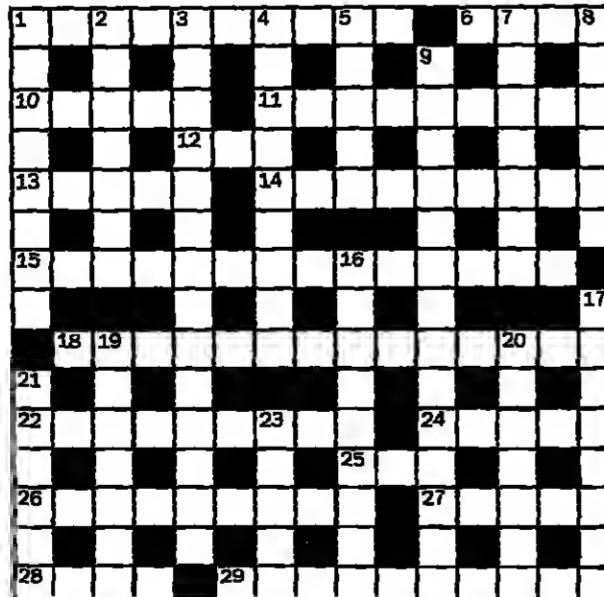
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No. 3648. Saturday 27 June

By Spurius

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YOUR MONEY

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Cut the cost of foreign money

Who gives the best deal on currency exchange?

Vicky Trapmore investigates

No trip abroad takes place without that embarrassing moment when a traveller confused by an unfamiliar profusion of local currency, will invite a shop assistant to take her pick from a handful of preferred small change.

Until a universal currency is invented, there is no way of avoiding that mild feeling of inadequacy. But in recent years, it has gradually become easier to pay your way when on foreign soil without making a total idiot of yourself.

There is a choice of ways to carry your money, with credit or debit cards, plus travellers cheques in local denominations. Sadly, no single payment method can ever replace cash completely. In fact, American Express, a major provider of both travellers cheques and charge cards, recommends holidaymakers take some of each. A spokeswoman advises:

"Carry a mixture of cash, travellers cheques and credit, debit and charge cards so that you have a number of options in case you run out of cash, lose your cheques, or damage your credit card abroad."

The major question facing travellers is that of how to obtain the best deal – and the most francs, pesetas or lire for your pound – from the wide range of foreign exchange options available.

It always makes sense to plan ahead. Currency conversion charges depend on the method chosen to buy foreign currency, but it is usually cheaper to convert large amounts in advance rather than waiting until you are abroad.

Take one example. An Abbey National debit card – for people who have an account with the bank – carries a 1.25 per cent cash advance handling fee and 1.5 per cent loading on all ATM withdrawals. By contrast, its credit card handling fee is 2.5 per cent, and the same loading fee is incurred when making cash withdrawals.

However, purchasing goods

directly incurs only the extra loading fee. Thus to get the same amount of francs, equivalent to £750, a typical two-week spend for a couple, using a cash machine in Marseilles will cost £20.63 in charges using a debit card and £22.13 with a credit card. Obtaining cash from your local Abbey National branch before you go will cost £11.25 in charges. That's £16.88 less than using a credit card in a machine abroad.

It is also important to shop around for the best exchange rate before you go, as this can vary wildly. A rate of nine francs to the pound rather than 9.5 francs gives 6 per cent less spending money.

In addition, it is worth checking the percentage commission charged. To take another example, for the equivalent of £750, NatWest would give you 7,252.5 francs and charge 2 per cent commission for non-members, a total of £15. At Marks & Spencer, £750 buys 7,208.25 francs, 44.25 francs less. Yet this option costs £10 less than choosing NatWest, because there is no commission fee at M&S.

Cash can be exchanged at a variety of locations in the UK. Obvious ones are high street banks, building societies, and bureaux de change in travel agents such as Thomas Cook.

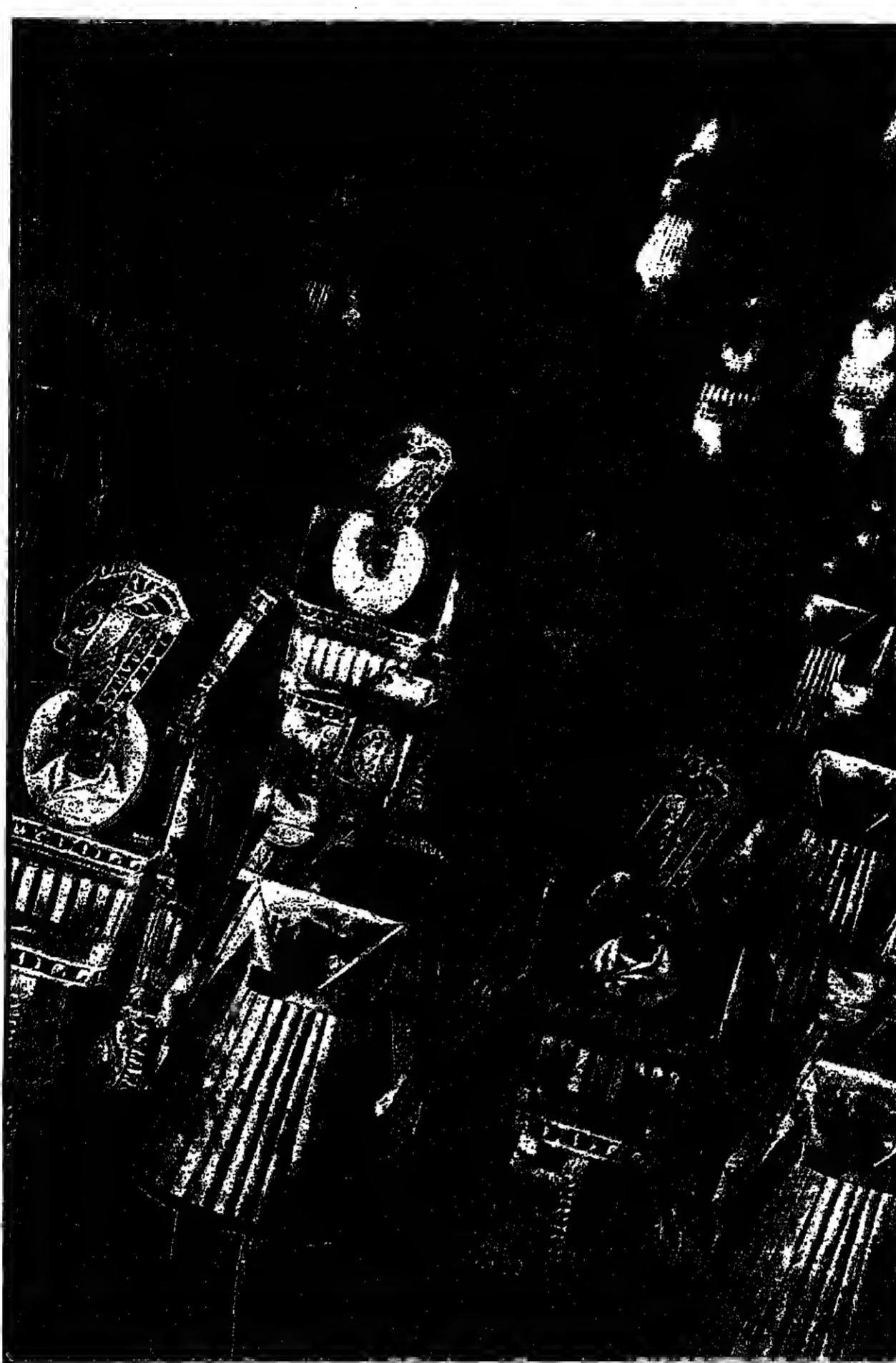
NatWest offers the best rate – before commission.

Before renewing your passport at the Post Office, enquire about its foreign exchange service. The rate for francs is competitive to that on the high street, and the GPO is now Britain's largest Bureau de Change retailer.

The no-commission offer at M&S makes it another unexpected location of foreign money very much worth visiting, although the number of stores where this service is available is still limited.

Travellers cheques are considered a fair safer option than cash, in that if they are lost or stolen replacements are usually available within 24 hours, while most issuers will offer emergency hotlines and additional services.

However, purchasing goods



Tommy Stone Images

tional support to holiday-makers. Cheques are available in an increasingly wide range of currencies – American Express offers 11, NatWest offers eight.

Before you buy them, it is always worth asking whether travellers cheques will be more acceptable in sterling, US dollars or the currency of the country being visited, as conversion prices vary in each case.

The commission on travellers cheques depends on the seller. Sterling travellers cheques are usually sold at a lower rate of commission (from 0.75 per cent to 1 per cent) than non-sterling ones (from 0.75 per cent to 2 per cent). Many outlets buy back unused travellers cheques free of charge if that was where they were purchased. The same goes for foreign currency.

Credit and debit cards are an increasingly popular source of cash abroad. The intense rivalry between the two major issuers, Visa and Mastercard means travellers will be regaled with conflicting claims as to how many outlets worldwide are prepared to accept their cards. The number is roughly similar, although there will be some minor regional variations. Nowadays, however, it is extremely difficult to travel in a country which does not accept both. If in doubt – try to take one of each.

Handling fees of between 1 and 2.5 per cent are levied when using a card card. Issuers charge a cash fee in addition to this. This fee is not added when using the card to buy goods directly. Thus it is cheaper to pay in a restaurant directly with your debit card than to withdraw cash from an ATM and pay cash. The amount of commission charged on cash withdrawals from one of the one billion automatic teller machines (ATM) in the world varies from 1.5 per cent to 2 per cent.

Thanks to the World Cup, there are many offers at the moment for commission on the French franc. Nationwide Building Society and the Halifax are both offering commission-free French francs for the duration of the World Cup.

Marks & Spencer is charging no commission for foreign money obtained via its account card from July to September this year. Meanwhile, the Post Office has enlisted the help of former footballer and TV personality Gary Lineker to launch its own commission-free francs and travellers cheques for purchases of £150 or more.

Marks & Spencer, Marble Arch branch 0171 935 7954; Post Office Counters 0345 22 33 44; Thomas Cook Holiday Money Direct 0890 44 77 22 or contact your local branch.

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How to beat the mortgage blues

HOLLYWOOD STAR Nicole Kidman is to act at London's tiny Dommar Warehouse theatre for its standard rate of just £250 a week, the minimum acceptable to Equity, the actors' union.

No doubt Kidman can afford the drop in income. But self-employed people of more modest means can find it difficult to meet the monthly mortgage payments when their income drops away. Mortgage lenders target these people with a range of special loans.

However, Philip Cartwright, of London & Country, independent mortgage brokers, warns that features such as payment holidays often come at the price of an uncompetitive interest rate.

He says: "What you should really look at with a mortgage is the bottom-line interest rate they are charging."

Ian Darby, of John Charcol, another independent mortgage adviser, agrees. He compares two loans, one from Alliance & Leicester and the other from Northern Rock Direct. A&L's interest payment holiday mortgage lets borrowers skip one mortgage payment of their choice a year. No interest is charged for the missed month. This is a variable rate loan, and the current rate is 8.95 per cent. Northern Rock Direct's loan will hold its rate below the average charged by five major lenders until at least 1 January 2000 and currently charges 7.29 per cent.

For a £60,000 interest-only loan, that means repayments with the A&L plan would be £447.50 a month but just £364.50 a month with Northern Rock.

A&L's spokeswoman, Michelle Weller, says her company's loan appeals to two groups of borrowers: people who aren't on a monthly salary and don't receive the same amount of money each month and

people who have the odd month when there are exceptional expenses.

"There are cheaper deals, but if you need £500 to clear something else that month, it is still a very strong benefit," she says.

Of course, the differential between these two particular loans may change over the years. But Mr Darby points out that the Northern Rock loan has no early redemption penalties, and so borrowers are free to leave if they find a better deal elsewhere. Mr Cartwright is also sceptical about the value of so-called flexible loans, which add some of the facilities of a bank account to your mortgage.

He singles out Woolwich's recently launched Open Plan, which gives borrowers a parallel personal loan with its own Visa card attached. The mortgage loan and the personal loan together can be for up to 90 per cent of the property's value.

Both accounts charge a variable rate of 8.1 per cent, implying repayment of £405 a month for our £60,000 interest-only loan.

Mr Cartwright says most borrowers would be far better off taking a cheaper loan and using the money saved, rather than relying on Woolwich's personal loan account. "They're just encouraging people to borrow money when they don't necessarily need it," he says. His own suggestion is a National County mortgage. The building society's standard variable rate is 8.29 per cent but it has a two per cent discount for the first two years. Based on these rates, monthly payments on a £60,000 interest-only loan would be £314.50 for the first two years and £414.50 thereafter. All the monthly repayment figures given here ignore Miras, mortgage interest relief granted by the taxman.

PAUL SLADE

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Outlet	Sterling travellers cheques	Non-sterling travellers cheques	Foreign currency	Handling charge (per order)	Rate French Francs bought 16th June	Rate French Francs sold 16th June			
	comm Charge %	min £	comm Charge %	min £	comm Charge %	min £			
Barclays	1.50	1.5%	2.50	1.5%	10.41	9.63			
Lloyds	3.00	1.0%	none	2.0	10.52	9.6455			
Nat West	4.00	2.0%	4.00	1.5%	10.4068	9.6768			
Halifax	1.0	3.00	1.5	3.00	10.3707	9.6425			
Nationwide	0.75	none	10.75	0.75	10.4481	9.6653			
Abbey National	1.00	2.50	1.5	2.50	10.211	9.6062			
Post Office	1.0	2.50	4.00	2.50	10.211	9.6034			
Counters	1.0	2.50	4.00	2.50	10.211	9.6034			
Marcus and Spencers	none	none	none	none	10.211	9.6034			
Thomas Cook	1.0	2.50	1.0	3.00	10.211	9.6034			

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INSIDE

Financial makeover
Collect to invest
Ethics and money

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Bogus sellers
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This advertisement appears on behalf of IPAP Limited, INVESTMENT PLANNING ADVISERS and has been approved by a person regulated by the PERSONAL INVESTMENT AUTHORITY. NO FEE OR PAYMENT MAY BE MADE AFTER APRIL 1994. THE VALUE OF TAX SAVINGS AND ELIGIBILITY TO INVEST IN A PEP OR ISA WILL DEPEND UPON INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND ALL TAX RULES MAY CHANGE IN THE FUTURE.

BACK IN the late 1980s, when the Conservatives were intent on "breaking the shackles" binding employees to their occupational pension schemes, Labour politicians warned that the move into personal pensions could turn into a disaster.

And so it proved. Up to two million of the seven or eight million people enticed into taking out a personal pension were wrongly advised to do so.

The cost of paying them redress has gradually mounted and the final bill could top £15bn. Moreover more and more offshoots of the same scandal are coming to light.

Weeding them out is vital. Unless the financial services industry can sort the mess it created, it won't have the credibility to provide so-called "stakeholder pensions", second-tier retirement plans proposed by Labour and which ministers are ready to see provided privately. Yet if events this week are an indication, pension providers are still unfit to be active in this area.

One of these mis-selling "offshoots" mentioned earlier concerns "rebate-only" personal pensions. This is where premiums paid into a policy consist *only* of National Insurance rebates given as a bribe by the Government as an incentive for people to opt out of the state's own earnings-related pension (Serps). This is calculated as a percentage of the individual's National Insurance contribution, itself related to how much he or she earned.

The problem with rebate-only personal pensions was that the charges levied on them by insurance companies meant that unless the rebate itself was linked to reasonably high earnings - it could take a huge chunk of the amount paid in. So huge, in fact, that many risked being worse off than if they had stayed in Serps. The disadvantaged are people with low incomes (of £3,000 or less); many of them women.

Now that insurers have been forced to sort out the most urgent pension compensation cases attention has switched to reviewing the "less urgent" ones. Among them are up to



NIC CICUTTI
The financial services industry is not ready to deliver on pension reforms

1.5 million rebate-only pension holders.

Unfortunately, this week, the Financial Services Authority, a new watchdog created by Labour, back-tracked over plans to include rebate-only policies in the review of potentially mis-sold pensions. A final decision on what is to be done will now be taken in the autumn. This U-turn only came about after massive lobbying by the financial services industry.

For hundreds of thousands of people, then, their cases are left in limbo for another six months at least - almost five years after the potential for mis-selling on a mass scale was first admitted by government regulators.

As if that were not enough, insurance companies admitted this week that admin problems mean they are unable to pay the annuities bought with a personal pension when a policyholder retires. In many cases, the delays have stretched to months. Even if you weren't mis-sold a pension at the time, it may still take months before you finally receive your retirement income.

If there is a lesson to be learned from this débâcle it is that the financial services industry is not yet ready - either morally or administratively - to deliver on the new stakeholder pension reforms.

To pretend otherwise is to risk another scandal in 10 years' time. Whether a Labour government as committed to slashing state pension costs as the Conservatives once were actually listens is another matter ...

BARRY WORKED in advertising until he was forced to retire seven years ago due to an accident. In his own words: "Being disabled is one thing, being poor and disabled isn't worth even thinking about."

As a result, he has worked extra hard at building up his financial assets and is now well off. But Barry feels his efforts, though successful, have been somewhat haphazard and he would like to bring some order to his affairs.

He is divorced with two sons and lives in London with his partner of 17 years, who has a daughter aged 30.

The adviser: Maddison Monetary Management, independent financial advisers (01753 701 002 or 01276 453 349).

The advice: Barry has a well-diversified portfolio, consisting of substantial shareholdings, unit and investment trusts, personal equity plans (PEPs), investment bonds, a Tessa, a small amount in venture capital trusts (VCTs) and cash in building society postal accounts.

With property included and no liabilities, his net worth is approximately £1.4m.

As a rule of thumb, one should have in percentage terms an amount equal to one's age in interest-earning investments, with the balance being in equity investments.

Therefore, in Barry's case this would mean 57 per cent in interest-earning and 43 per cent in equities. The current balance is about 20 per cent and 80 per cent respectively. He may wish to do this over the next few years as opposed to one fell swoop.

This could be achieved by selling some of Barry's equity investments and reinvesting in more stable and secure fixed-interest securities or index-linked gilts, cash-based investments, short-term money markets or even cautious managed or with-profits funds with investment bonds.

Diversification could still be retained by using a company which has multiple fund management links, using external fund managers as well as their own to provide greater choice and flexibility.

Providers who fit this critique

FINANCIAL MAKEOVER

NAME: BARRY BROOKS; **AGE:** 57.

OCCUPATION: FORMER PARTNER IN AN ADVERTISING AGENCY



Barry Brooks: disability is not an obstacle to wealth generation **Glyn Griffiths**

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Rationalising assets

hundred thousand pounds of IHT, as assets passing to a spouse are free of tax.

This is not the case with common-law spouses. If his partner were to accept his proposal of marriage, Barry could then consider utilising a discretionary will trust (DWT). Because this is a trust which does not come into effect until death, it allows the settlor of the trust to retain ownership and use of his assets during his or her own lifetime and allows the spouse to receive interest-free loans (repayable on her subsequent death) during her lifetime, thus providing ultimate flexibility and control.

This results in an IHT reduction of £29,200, 40 per cent of the current nil-rate band of £223,000.

Part of Barry's portfolio consists of a property in Tenerife. This would form part of his estate for IHT purposes as a worldwide asset.

At present, Barry's income consists of state benefits and income from a permanent health insurance (PHI) policy.

PHI is classed as unearned income and therefore cannot be used to base pension contributions on.

Barry should also look at how his situation might change at 65 when the PHI stops being paid. He has a deferred pension with Unilever, a deferred annuity plan and two personal pension plans.

While a divorce cancels any automatic rights of an ex-spouse, the claims process will be made much smoother by actually nominating the unmarried partner to receive the benefits.

Barry should also ensure that his personal pensions are written under trust.

Setting up a personal trust, by completing a simple form provided by the insurer, allows individuals to choose their own trustees, avoiding any probate delays and ensuring that his partner receives the fund value if Barry were to die before retirement, free of inheritance tax (IHT), as opposed to his estate receiving it.

This brings us on to Barry's will. With no planning so far, his estate would face an IHT liability of approximately £600,000. If his intention is for his partner to be the *malum* beneficiary then it may prove worthwhile to marry her and in the process save several

This is because the payout is likely to be much later due to the probability that at least one partner will live to old age.

Competitive providers of this cover could include Legal & General, Allied Dunbar and Scottish Provident.

Scots' tax relief fears

Devolution could see Scottish pension savers losing out, writes Andrew Verity

SCOTTISH SAVERS could be deprived of the full benefit of tax relief on their pensions under a change the Government is being urged to make to its plans for Scottish devolution.

The Association of British Insurers - which includes Scottish life offices - this week said it was lobbying the Government to limit tax relief on pensions to the UK rate of income tax.

If the Government agrees, the change will mean Scottish pension savers can only get tax relief at the UK rate of income tax - even though they could be paying up to 3 per cent more tax than their English counterparts.

Until now, the principle has always been that pensions savings attract tax relief at the saver's highest tax rate.

The Government currently plans to give tax relief on pensions at the marginal rate - so Scottish savers paying up to 26 per cent under a Scottish parliament would also get tax relief at 26 per cent.

But insurers have complained this will make it much more difficult to administer pensions because their computer systems would have to distinguish between Scottish and English taxpayers. If Scottish income tax is at 26 per cent and UK income tax is at 23 per cent, they want Scottish taxpayers to get just 23 per cent relief.

A spokeswoman for the Association of British Insurers says: "This could be an administrative nightmare. It would be very difficult to identify whether someone was living in Scotland or working in England or vice versa."

The change would be dealt with in regulations under the Scotland Bill, currently reaching its last stages of debate in the House of Lords. Barring government defeat, it will be given Royal Assent by the autumn.

John Swinney MP Treasury spokesman for the Scottish National Party says:

"We want people to benefit as much as possible from Scotland's tax-varying powers. And we are anxious to ensure conditions are as advantageous as possible for people under devolution." He adds that the desire of Scottish life insurers to simplify matters must be balanced with policyholders' wishes.

However, the move would prove doubly controversial with occupational pension schemes. Ironically, the National Association of Pension Funds believes it will make matters more complicated for them, not less.

Unlike personal pensions run by life insurers, savings to occupational schemes are paid out of untaxed income - that is, the money goes in before it is taxed. (With personal pensions, a rebate

is paid on contributions made from income that has already been taxed). Thus employers - rather than insurers - would be forced to work out who is a Scottish and who is an English taxpayer.

The SNP is already annoyed at the way the Inland Revenue has tried to define who is a Scottish and who is an English taxpayer.

Apparently concerned that people will go to the lengths of working in Carlisle (23 per cent tax) and living in Dumfries (up to 26 per cent), Inland Revenue officials have tried to define Scottish taxpayers according to the number of days they spend in Scotland and where their main residency is - throwing up some interesting absurdities.

Under the draft legislation, someone who leaves Dumfries at 11.58pm on Tuesday night and gets back from Carlisle by 12.01am on Thursday morning is an English taxpayer for that day. A minute later leaving, or a minute earlier returning, and he or she becomes a Scottish taxpayer.

"You could be an English taxpayer if you do the nightshift but a Scottish taxpayer if you do the dayshift," Mr Swinney said. "This are probably about five people in the whole of the UK to whom this might apply. But employers are going to have to check information on 3.5 million Scottish employees to see if they are dodging the system. It would be much more sensible simply to send a tax return to the principal place of residence."

SPOTLIGHT

ABERDEEN PROLIFIC MONTHLY INCOME PEP

The deal: Aberdeen Prolific has packaged three of its highest-yielding unit trusts into a single monthly income PEP offering a potential yield of 6.45 per cent.

Included in the three is the Fixed Interest fund, which is currently used for its Corporate Bond PEP. At the moment this yields 7.45 per cent.

Also inside the PEP is the Extra Income fund, which contains a lower proportion of fixed interest securities and yields 3.56 per cent.

Finally, there is the company's Fund of Investment Trusts, which currently yields 8.35 per cent in high-yielding income shares of investment trusts.

The minimum investment is £500 per fund. Initial charges are 4.25 per cent and 1.25 per cent annually.

Plus points: Obtaining a high income from an investment is only one side of the equation.

The aim is also to do this in the context of capital growth, with minimum security. Aberdeen Prolific attempts to meet these criteria by offering a combination which includes both a riskier element (the Extra Income fund) and a lower-risk one (Fixed Interest).

Performance has been good: the fixed interest fund has ranked first on an income-paying basis, returning 37.9 per cent net. Capital returns over five years are also a respectable 31.4 per cent.

The Extra Income fund is top in the UK Equity & Bond Income sector over five years, with returns of 103.7 per cent in the year to the end of May.

Drawbacks and risks: Some experts warn that the high income achieved through corporate bond PEPs, for which the fixed interest fund is Aberdeen's underlying trust, may not last in new economic conditions. At the same time, the potential for capital growth offered by the Extra Income fund, which is riskier than others in its sector, may be denting by a declining stock market. Could it be that this is a PEP whose time was yesterday?

Verdict: Good for investors who are in the income and growth market for the longer term and are prepared to ride out any short-term market fluctuations.

Marks out of five: Four

NIC CICUTTI

مكتبة من الأدلة

Yesterday's hopeful young artists have arrived ...

Modern artwork is very much in demand.
John Windsor
explains why

Sotheby's summer contemporary art sales take place next week in what has become a supercharged market. This year, more names of young British artists have been appearing for the first time at auction than ever before.

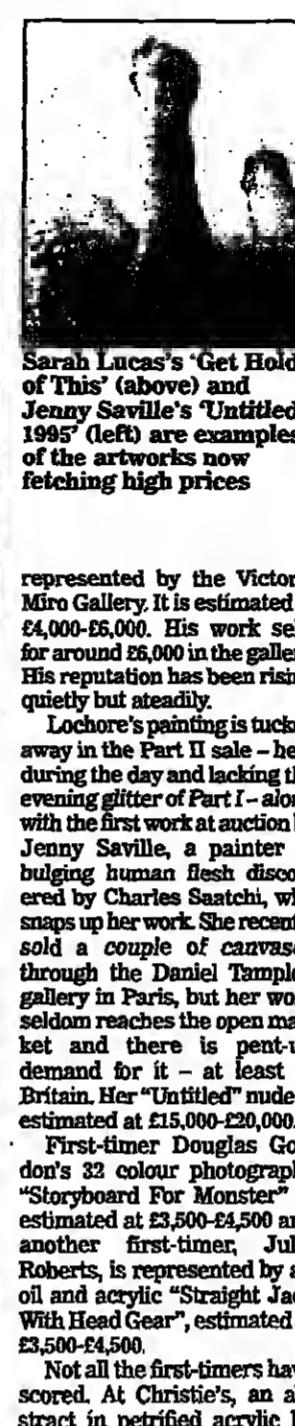
Critics tut-tutted when rival Christie's announced a fast-forward in marketing, shifting the date for "modern" artists from 1870 to 1900 - and holding a contemporary sale in April of work produced only in the past 30 years, instead of since the war. It was a big-budget promotion with a hard-back sale catalogue full of explanatory essays aimed at rich new buyers.

By tradition, auctioneers play safe, selling only second-hand works by artists with an established track record. That suits dealers, whose nightmare is seeing work by a relatively unknown young artist, whose reputation they are nurturing, left ignominiously unsold at auction. Or, which is as bad, being forced to avoid such embarrassment by bidding up the price themselves.

There were mutterings before its successful April sale that, in trade jargon, Christie's was trying to force a secondary (secondhand) market onto a primary (fresh from dealer) market that needed a longer breathing space. In the event, Christie's sale raised £2,836,370, selling 74 per cent by lot and 85 per cent by value. If there was a let-down, it was not among the YBAs, but among German first-timers such as Dieter Huber and Herwig Turk.

The moral is: time passes more quickly than we think. And the contemporary art market - especially for YBAs - is much stronger than most people thought. First-timers at Christie's such as Sarah Lucas, Sylvie Fleurié, and Chris Ofili are not really YBAs any longer. They have CVs as long as your arm and waiting lists for their work. They are well able to withstand the love-it-or-leave-it brusque of the saleroom - and have been for some time.

The reason their work has not appeared at auction before has less to do with the hide-bound scepticism of auctioneers than the fact that collector-investors in YBAs have been hanging on to their purchases from dealers, while watching their artists' profiles



Sarah Lucas's 'Get Hold of This' (above) and Jenny Saville's 'Untitled 1995' (left) are examples of the artworks now fetching high prices

rise. As Sotheby's Elena Geuma put it: "The problem now is not how to sell it, but how to find enough of it."

The other confidence-boosting factor is that entry into the London auction market is not the make-or-break test of a young artist's reputation that it used to be. Although London has the most vibrant contemporary art scene in the world, the biggest reputation-making forum is not in London but at the big European contemporary art fairs, especially Basel in June. (more important even than Chicago), which is attended by everyone who is anyone in the contemporary art trade.

London auctioneers have been flitting to Basel, Cologne, Bologna and Berlin eyeing up artworks and watching reputations gain international status

fairs - that there is now a whole string of young artists, both from Britain and abroad, whose work is exceeding gallery prices at auction. Yesterday's young hopefuls have arrived.

Sarah Lucas, for example - hitherto known as an up-and-coming YBA. But, surely, she's famous now. And at 35 about to become a not-so-young BA. That's the point. All of a sudden,

galleries for \$4,000 (£2,500) in 1994-5 when her work was already selling out - appeared at Christie's in April with an estimate of £4,000-£6,500, those in the know were not surprised when it sold for £13,000. Her gallery, Sadie Coles, said of the high auction price: "It's simply a vindication of Sarah's hard work over the past few years".

Sylvie Fleurié, 37, lives and works in Geneva and is less

established a reputation. Investors look for such staying power.

At her auction debut at Christie's, her 'Untitled (Vogue Cover)', estimated at £2,000-£3,000, fetched £3,600.

If auctioneers continue to be selective and auction prices continue to exceed what a gallery would charge, then gallery prices are likely to rise in sympathy. There is a danger of a price spiral that could end in tears. The contemporary art market is robust now, but during the recession it showed itself to be the most fragile sector after Impressionism.

Meanwhile, the time it takes for an artwork bought fresh from a gallery to be sold at a profit at auction is getting shorter. The collage, oil and polyester "7 Bitches Tossing Their Pussies Before the Divine Dung" by Chris Ofili, whose vigorous semi-abstract paintings featuring (odourless) elephant dung appeared in "Sensation", was bought for £8,000 from the Victoria Miro gallery in London only a year ago. It sold at Christie's in April - an auction debut for Ofili - for £10,925.

What to watch at Sotheby's next week? A feint and dreamy oil on canvas "Shadow No 68" by auction debutant Brad Lachore, a New Zealander, also

well-known here. But in the past seven years she has had over 40 solo exhibitions. You might think some of her work flippant - such as her "Doll Platforms", three pairs of women's shoes on their boxes; the product perhaps, of idle daydreams and a carefree lifestyle. But consider her prolific output and all the travel, the shipping, the setting up of half a dozen shows a year. She, too, has toiled to es-

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represented by the Victoria Miro Gallery. It is estimated at £4,000-£5,000. His work sells for around £5,000 in the gallery. His reputation has been rising quietly but steadily.

Lachore's painting is tucked away in the Part II sale - held during the day and lacking the evening glitter of Part I - along with the first work at auction by Jenny Saville, a painter of bulging human flesh discovered by Charles Saatchi, who snaps up her work. She recently sold a couple of canvases through the Daniel Tampon gallery in Paris, but her work seldom reaches the open market and there is pent-up demand for it - at least in Britain. Her "Untitled" nude is estimated at £15,000-£20,000.

First-timer Douglas Gordon's 32 colour photographs "Storyboard For Monster" is estimated at £2,500-£4,500 and another first-timer, Julie Roberts, is represented by an oil and acrylic "Straight Jack With Head Gear", estimated at £3,000-£4,500.

Not all the first-timers have scored. At Christie's, an abstract in petrified acrylic by Graham Westfield - accepted for sale because his name was deemed to have potential - sold for £1,725 below the £2,000-£3,000 estimate. In the same sale, a drug-filled display cabinet titled "God", by Damien Hirst, leader of the Brinkpack, who, one suspects, will soon be called a "blue-chip" artist along with Klein and Fontana (members of the old firm still classified as "contemporary" according to Sotheby's post-1945 time-frame) sold for a sensational £188,500. The estimate, £10,000-£15,000, had been considered a "bit hot" by Christie's Graham Southern.

Is there a chance that the market will now be glutted by profit-taking investors? Auctioneers are still choosy, and wisely so. But identical works from the same edition, appearing in different auctions, could start the rot. Thomas Ruff's colour photograph "Portrait (C. Pilar)" made £9,775 at Christie's. An identical image is estimated at only £1,500-£2,000 at Sotheby's next week. Someone, somewhere, could soon be kicking themselves.

Sotheby's Contemporary Art, Part I Thursday 2 July (7pm), Part II Friday 3 July (10.30am); 34-35 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171 293 5000).

MONEYWORLD, one of the UK's leading personal finance websites, is highly regarded and carries lots of useful information. In addition to its open format, Moneyworld now offers club membership (registration is free) which allows you to set up your own private portfolio and benefit from special offers and an investment newsletter.

The portfolio service lets you see an online display of the value of your investments. You can create multiple portfolios with valuations updated every 10 minutes, offering an at-a-glance view of the value of your holdings as the trading day progresses. Moneyworld intends to expand the service to include unit trusts.

Among the special offers currently available are holiday discounts, discounts on seminars held by Personal Finance Educational Services (PFES) and up to 40 per cent off the price of financial books in the MoneyWorld BookClub.

However, Moneyworld has also suffered, on two occasions, the indignity of having its name taken in vain. Its site address is "moneyworld.co.uk". It recently had to resort to legal action over a website named "moneyworld.com" which was acting as a gateway to pornographic websites. Apparently the operator was earning a fee for each person who accessed the porn sites it was advertising. The site has now been withdrawn.

Previously, and perhaps more seriously, Moneyworld also took action against a Seattle-based share tipping operation with a similar website name. Most of us should be able to tell the difference between pornography and financial services at a glance, however, as more financial services become available online, honest confusion over Internet names will grow, as will the potential for fraud.

A new watchdog, the Financial Services Authority (FSA), last month issued guidance on investment advertisements on the Internet by foreign companies. UK financial internet sites are already subject to the rules and regulations covering other financial services providers.

The FSA believes that, if you can view an investment advertisement on the Inter-

INTERNET INVESTOR

ROBIN AMLOT



net in the UK, that advertisement may be interpreted as having been issued in the UK and, therefore, subject to UK regulations. Its new guidelines were issued partly in response to requests from US financial services providers.

Yet while the FSA's rules provide guidance for the honest purveyor, what of potential fraudsters? The onus is still on us to make sure we are dealing with the real thing. So check the website address, and if you are in any doubt, contact the organisation by other means. Remember that a website with an address including .co.uk or just .uk may not necessarily be based in the UK.

One site has been established specifically to help Internet users verify the credibility of investment websites. NotCon, an industry co-operative, hopes to have a supervisory board that will monitor all websites selling financial services. All properly regulated organisations supporting the initiative would be asked to display the NotCon icon on their websites. NotCon does not provide advice or endorsements about the quality of organisations, products and investments; it is concerned solely with providing consumer education and website authentication.

So far, the industry has been slow to respond - which is a pity. It is horribly easy to be fooled, as NotCon itself proved by registering the name virgin-direct.com, thus exposing Virgin's failure to check sites with similar names.

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BRIAN
TORA

It's the mega deals that hit the headlines, but what about the smaller companies?

IT WAS, I believe, Professor Schumacher who coined the phrase "small is beautiful" around a quarter of a century ago. Speaking from the perspective of my 40-inch-plus waistline and a 16.5-inch collar size, I have every sympathy with this view. The stock market, on the other hand, is on a different tack entirely.

Take the mega deals that hit the headlines. Nemesis waits for those investors who have been driving markets in a direction which appears increasingly to be set in stone. In continental Europe there is now a queue of smaller companies waiting to come to the market. But if you look at the state of the less-than-big boys in the US and UK - now markets number one and two respectively in terms of market capitalisation - you realise that the enthusiasm of the vendor owners might prove to be short-lived.

In this age of the equity saver, too much money is being concentrated in too few hands. But, while we see deals as big as that in the telecoms industry, is it any wonder that the really serious money managers see no reason to look too far down the list of companies before committing their resources?

Well, I remain as responsible as most, preferring to recommend the bigger companies whenever I am asked to comment in the media. There is a good reason for this. The downside - by and large - is less. Moreover, you stand a better chance of striking a chord with your audience. Investors have heard of BT, but may not be aware of Ionica (almost certainly to their financial advantage).

But this polarisation is worrying. The US Big Board index may be resilient, but smaller companies have been in a bear market since the beginning of the decade. And while deals like AT&T's continue to grab the headlines, this situation is likely to remain.

Brian Tora is chairman of the Creig Middleton investment strategy committee.

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Principality BS	0800 133817	5.40% to 30.0 01	0%	0.25% No high lending fee
Abbey National	0800 555100	5.95% to 31.0 03	0%	0.25% No PEP for adv up to 80%
VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES				
Savemore BS	0890 133149	1.50% for 1 year	0%	0.25% No high lending fee
Principality BS	0800 133817	4.40% to 13.0 00	0%	0.25% Reduced Valuation Fee
Nationwide BS	0800 302010	0.95% for 5 years	0%	0.25% Reduced Valuation Fee
FIRST TIME BUYERS FIXED RATES				
Northern Rock	0845 655 0500	4.40% to 11.00	0%	0.25% No PEP for adv up to 85%
Habitat	0800 161110	5.75% to 31.0 01	0%	0.25% No high lending fee (P&I)
Nationwide BS	0800 302010	5.00% for 5 years	0%	0.25% No high lending fee
FIRST TIME BUYERS VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES				
Principality BS	0800 090098	4.70% to 24.0 00	0%	0.25% Free high lending fee
Northern Rock	0845 655 0500	8.25% for 3 years	0%	0.25% No high lending fee
Garden City BS	01322 411000	7.15% for 5 years	0%	0.25% No high lending fee
UNSECURED PERSONAL LOANS				
Telephone	APR %	Read monthly payments on £5K over 3 yrs		
INSECURED				
Northern Rock	0845 421421	9.95% H	£163.13	£166.11
Yorkshire Bank	0800 232122	12.5%	£160.55	£165.77
Direct Line	0161 600 9999	12.5% A	£163.75	£166.38
SECURED LOANS (SECOND CHARGE)				
Telephone	APR	Max LTV Advance	Total	
Cheshire Bank	0800 240084	8.75%	£5K to £15K	0 rates to 25 years
Royal Bank of Scotland	0800 121121	10.75%	£2.5K to £10K	3 years to return 1
First Direct	0845 1001003	11.25%	£5K to £15K	Up to 40 years
OVERDRAFTS				
Telephone	Account	% per	APR	3 yrs APR
Alliance & Leasing	0800 5559005	Allianz	0.95%	12.00% 2.20%
Bank of Scotland Direct	0800 049494	Direct cheque	0.95%	11.00% 2.05%
Nationwide BS	0800 302010	Repayment	0.95%	12.25% 2.10% 20.5%
CREDIT CARDS				
Telephone	Card Type	Rate %	APR %	Annual fee, min 10 min, inc
Capital One Bank	0800 699000	Visa	0.555% to 9.50%	N/A 54 days
RBS Adverts	0800 977770	Visa	0.645% to 7.50%	N/A 58 days
Nationwide BS	0800 302011	Visa	0.655% to 8.50%	N/A 52 days
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Capital One Bank	0800 699000	Visa	0.555% to 9.50%	N/A 54 days £20K
Co-operative Bank	0345 212212	Basic Rate Visa	0.65% to 12.25%	£120 40 days £20K
RBS Adverts	0800 977770	Visa	0.645% to 7.50%	N/A 56 days £20K
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Telephone	Purchase by direct debit		Purchase by other methods	
John Lewis	Via store	1.25%	18.0%	1.25% 18.0%
BS	Via card	1.95%	26.0%	2.15% 26.0%
Marks & Spencer	01244 681681	1.97%	20.3%	2.07% 27.5%
<small>A - Minimum age 22 yrs. Holders of comprehensive motor insurance policy or lender's existing customers APR - Annualised percentage rate ASU - Accident, sickness and unemployment assistance B+C = Buildings and contents insurance C - Credit limit CV - Credit value MP - Mortgage indemnity premium N - Introductory rate for a limited period U - Unemployment insurance</small>				
<small>* A comprehension fee is before 30.4% All rates subject to change without notice. Source: MONEYFACTS 01603 476476 25 June 1998</small>				

BEST SAVINGS

Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
INSTANT ACCESS					
Cyberbank BS	0800 442625	Savings	Instant	£1	8.75% Day
Woolwich	0800 222200	Card Saver	Instant	£50	8.75% Day
Stout & Swinton BS	0343 413805	Branch instant	Instant	£100	6.00% Year
Lewis & Hobbs BS	0800 252777	Premier Access	Instant	£5,000	7.00% Year
INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS					
Nationwide BS	0800 302010	InvestDirect	Postal	£1	7.30% Year
C & G	0800 742437	Instant Transfer	Postal	£1,000	7.50% Year
First National BS	0800 558644	Direct Access	Postal	£5,000	7.30% Year
Northern Rock	0845 600 5797	Save Instant Direct	Postal	£10,000	7.00% Year
NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS					
Cheltenham BS	0800 132651	Post-It 40	40 Day (S)	£5,000	7.80% Year
Standard Life Bank	0345 556671	50 Day Rates	50 Day (T)	£1	7.55% Year
Legal & General Bank	0800 112300	60 Direct 4	60 Day (S)	£2,500	7.70% Year
Legal & General Bank	0800 112300	60 Direct 4	60 Day (T)	£10,000	8.00% Year
CHEQUE ACCOUNTS					
Investec Bank (HQ)	0171 203 1850	HICA 5000	Instant	£5,000	8.00% Month
Habitat	0800 225620	Asset Reserve	Instant	£10,000	5.5

6/UNIT TRUSTS

هذا من الأصل

Creaming off the dividends

The market may turn from bullish to bearish, but high-yield stock can cushion you from its vagaries. By Guy Dennis

"BACK TO BASICS" was the slogan of a dying Conservative government, and it could yet be the cry from a dying bull-market. Share prices have risen dramatically - with the FTSE 100 rising by 25 per cent in the last year - and a fall may be in the pipeline, but going back to the basics of shares may save investors from the worst of a drop in the market.

The most basic aspect of a share is its dividend - an amount paid to shareholders, usually twice yearly, by companies - and with the high prices in the stock market at the moment, this should be to the fore in investors' minds.

In recent years, yields have fallen to lower and lower levels as share prices have come to be seen as the major determinant of where markets are moving. Yet they remain important - and not just as a source of income. They are a means of investing "defensively" at a time when there are mounting suspicions that the markets' bull run has stalled.

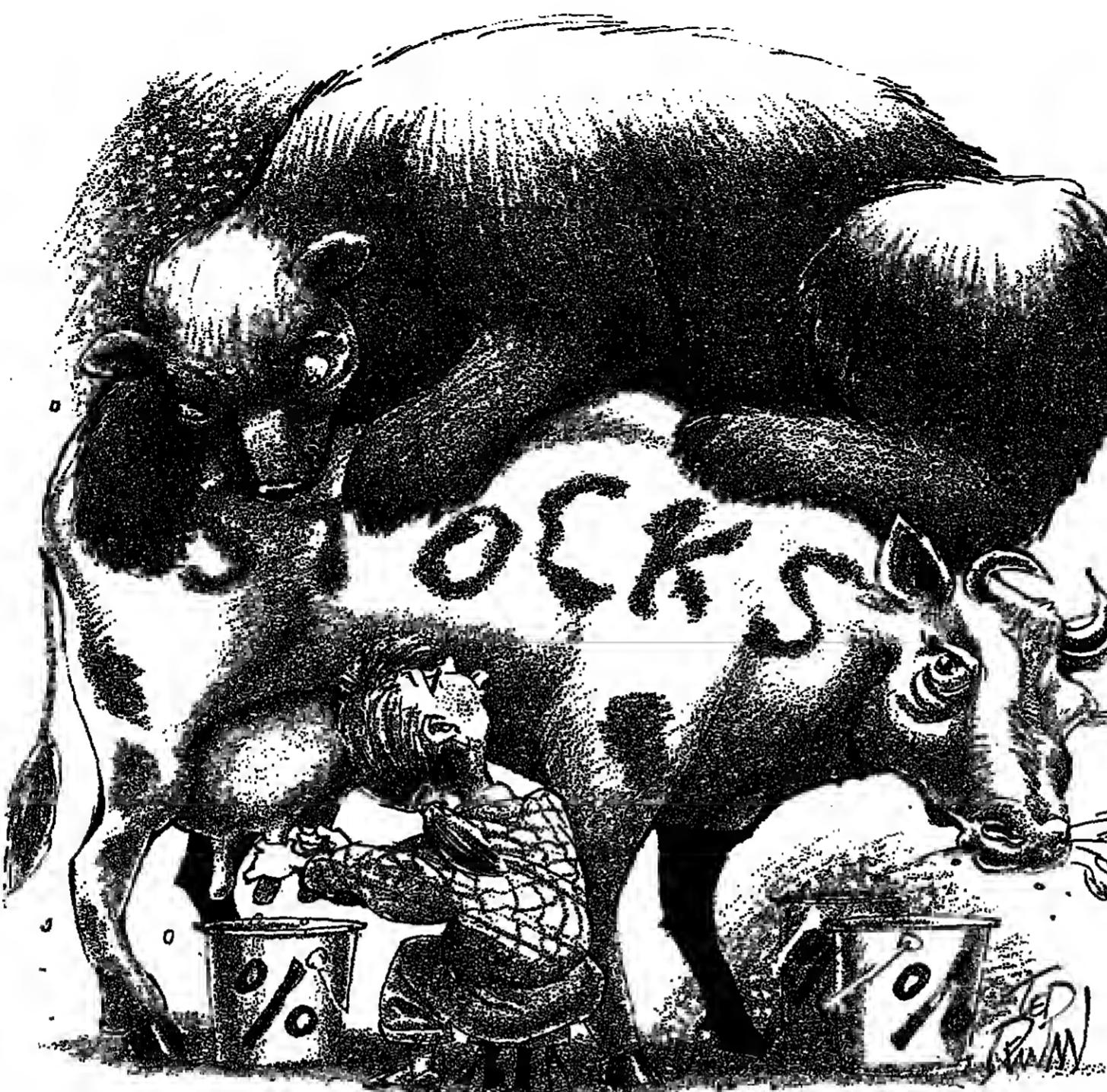
Not only are dividends one way to profit from shares, since they are paid to shareholders, but expectations of future dividends determine the prices of shares in the market.

Dividends are usually expressed in terms of dividend yields, or "just yield" as it is listed on the share pages of newspapers, including *The Independent*. This is the annual dividend per share divided by the market price of the share. So if a share with a price of £1 has a yield of 5 per cent, the dividend is 5 pence per year.

Yield is important at present because shares with high yields may be affected less by a fall in the market. This will have implications for a portfolio or any investment plans, especially if one wants to invest defensively, having some exposure to the market but suffering less in the event of a fall.

As Matthew Orr, a partner at stockbrokers Killik & Co, says: "If you've got a company that is going to offer you a quality 8 per cent yield then even if the market were to come back down, 8 per cent is always going to be an attractive income to get on your money."

There will be buyers



around who just say, "Well OK, I'm happy to keep the shares because even if I just get 8 per cent on my money and my capital goes nowhere, I'm still getting a reasonably good return. Equally, if the market does turn around, then I've got my toe in so that when it rises on the next upturn, I can enjoy part of the upside".

The important point here is Mr Orr's insistence on "quality yield", by which he means yield that is unlikely to fall. High yield as an indicator is not enough on its own - you need high yield you can depend on.

"There is a defence in high yield shares, provided the company behind them has a strong balance sheet, so that the dividend is well covered by earnings and is secure. Then I think that if you have a high yield, it does act as a defence," explains Michael MacDougall, associate director of Norwich

and Peterborough Building Society's stockbroking arm, Waters Lumiss.

Investors need to be wary of two potential problems with high yield shares. Firstly, high yield now may encourage some companies to offer lower yield in the future. A company may have high dividends, and therefore high yield, and use this to justify a cut in dividends leaving you without the return you anticipated.

Secondly, if a stock market fall results from recession, and most expect it will, then a company's profits will be hit and this may reduce dividends. This effect will vary from company to company, but it is an important factor.

What investors should be on the lookout for are so-called "income shares". Utilities provide a good example: their share prices reflect their dividends now rather than high expectations of future growth - hence their high yield - plus the fact that there will be demand for their services even in recession.

They are also mature stocks, with a good track record in paying high dividends. Therefore, they provide relatively reliable income and are likely to suffer less in a stock market fall. They will still produce a healthy dividend.

The attractiveness of income shares is enhanced by the fact that many of them have not risen too much in the recent bull market. "Income shares generally didn't perform particularly well last year, and didn't get overbought," adds Mr MacDougall.

However, deciding which high-yield shares are dependable and attractive is not always easy. *The Independent* asked a selection of stockbrokers to name their preferred choices.

All of their suggestions offer yield above the FT Actuaries All-Share yield of 2.88 per cent at the time of writing - although the high level of the market means that yields may not all be as high as in the past.

Investors with smaller sums of money, under £50,000 say,

may also want to consider high-income unit trusts - they invest in these kinds of shares as well as other income-generating investments, such as bonds. However, stockbrokers point out that for the really riskaverse, cash and bonds are still the preferred option.

MAG Income Investment Trust Geared Units: yield 7.8 per cent. The trust has a life of under four years and only needs 2.8 per cent growth to protect your investment. Past performance suggests it will exceed this.

BROKERS' ADVICE: 'GO FOR DIVIDEND GROWTH POTENTIAL'



JEREMY BATSTONE
Head of research
NatWest Stockbrokers

Southern Electric: yield 5.7 per cent. Strong balance sheet and an annual dividend growth target of 5-8 per cent in real terms offers scope for good returns. It is also a takeover candidate. The group seems reasonably well placed ahead of the next regulatory review in 2000. Scottish Power: yield 4.8 per cent. Scottish should have a lower proportion of profits from regulated activities and should offer continued good dividend growth potential. P&O: yield 4.6 per cent. Continuing to benefit from the strategy outlined in the 1996 re-focusing programme, involving property disposals and joint ventures to reduce exposure to difficult markets. The shares stand on a sub-market P/E ratio as well as offering premium yield. Merchant's Trust: yield 4.4 per cent. This UK Income Growth Trust has proved popular with investors seeking a safe haven from sterling's ongoing strength and its adverse consequences for companies with overseas earnings. REXXAM: yield 3.8 per cent. A new management team has been repositioning and rationalising this group of packaging and printing companies. Its key markets are still awaiting upturn.



MATTHEW ORR
Partner
Killik & Co

Carpetright: yield 10.2 per cent. Profit warnings have dragged the share price down, but directors have been buying shares. A speculative recovery stock. Lambert Fenchurch: yield 6.8 per cent. Leading insurance broker forecasting modest increase in profits for the forthcoming year. Recent ventures in Germany and the United States are being formed with strong overseas partners. United Assurance: yield 4.8 per cent. A new chairman and chief executive look likely to awaken the potential in this large insurance group, which has hitherto specialised in traditional door-to-door sales of policies to less affluent clients. Rio Tinto: yield 4.6 per cent. The largest mining company in the world. Recent weakness provides a buying opportunity for longer-term investors. Williams Holdings: yield 4.1 per cent. Owning Yale and Chubb, two major locksmith companies in the UK. This group looks set to benefit from growth in the fire protection and security systems markets, both for domestic and commercial properties.



ALLAN COLLINS
Partner
Redmayne Bentley

Carpetright: yield 10.2 per cent. Profit warnings have dragged the share price down, but directors have been buying shares. A speculative recovery stock. Billiton: yield 5.2 per cent. This is a property investment and development, building and civil engineering company, also engaged in contracting, housebuilding and plant hire. It is a small-cap company whose shares have almost halved in price on the back of weak metal prices, so good value. HSBC: yield 4.3 per cent. One of the largest banks in the world, owns Midland Bank in the UK. Has become a casualty of the Asian crisis, but strong enough to emerge a long-term beneficiary of weaker banks' vulnerability. Next: yield 4.3 per cent. The shares of this clothes and mail-order furnishing retailing store have fallen recently but directors have been buying. A fallen star which should regain its former glamour. PowerGen: yield 4.4 per cent. Good dividend growth of this electricity and gas company, with a range of international operations, is projected and a strong balance sheet may lead to acquisitions or a possible tie-up with a US company.

AIM FOR A 'HEFTY YIELD'



ANTHEA GAUKROGER
Associate director
Greig Middleton

United Utilities: yield 6.4 per cent. Boardroom problems at this water and electricity supplier, with growing interests in telecoms, have been overcome and new management is aiming for strong rises in real dividends. Anglian Water: yield 6.0 per cent. Some of the best standards (lowest leakage rates) in the water industry, combined with cost-cutting suggest further dividend growth is expected.

Land Securities: yield 3.8 per cent. The UK's largest quoted property company, specialising in the ownership and development of out-of-town retail food superstores, industrial and warehouse properties, it looks set to enjoy rising rents and growth in net asset value.

British Telecom: yield 3.1 per cent. Still the dominant supplier of telecoms despite competition, BT is well placed to benefit from newly liberalised continental markets, and is engaged in a number of joint ventures, although it appears to have been left at the altar by a number of potential suitors.

Commercial General Union: yield 3.0 per cent. The newly-merged life and general insurance group, formerly General Accident and Commercial Union, is aiming for cost savings of £225m in the next two years.

Life insurance business is moving ahead, although competition continues in the merged group's general insurance business, and problems with subsidence and storms continue.



MICHAEL MACDOUGALL
Associate director
Waters Lumiss

Framlington Income and Capital Investment Trust: yield 9.9 per cent. Locking into this high yield for a five-year period looks attractive and the manager of the trust adopts a low-risk strategy.

British Steel: yield 9.8 per cent. The shares look excellent value. Last year the strong pound cost British Steel £500m in profits which were also hit by recessions in Asia. Despite its recent strength, I believe sterling is set to ease steadily in the next few years as we move towards a single currency, creating fresh opportunities for British Steel.

Invesco Geared Opportunities Trust: yield 9.3 per cent. Geared Ordinary Shares in this trust deliver a hefty yield, and while this trust was only launched recently, increasing risk slightly, it looks promising at present.

AG Holdings: yield 8.8 per cent. A small company, but Europe's largest manufacturer of reels for cables, from the larger ones supplied to cable and wire rope manufacturers to collapsible reels for the French market. Financially strong and the shares are trading at a significant discount to both the sector and market average.

MAG Income Investment Trust Geared Units: yield 7.8 per cent. The trust has a life of under four years and only needs 2.8 per cent growth to protect your investment. Past performance suggests it will exceed this.

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Legal & General

Wanted: car radios with knobs on

IF YOU don't know what Dolby, RDS and ICE are, then, like me, you won't want a complicated car radio. You simply want something easy to use that sounds good. And, like me, once you've bought your radio (almost certainly standard with the car) you'll probably listen to no more than four or five different stations ever, and occasionally play a tape or CD.

Car company research, you'll be pleased to know, identifies us radio illiterates as being very much the normal car buyer. Yet car companies - who think they understand their buyers but rarely do - offer ever more complicated radios, with ever more functions, all adding to the cost of cars.

"We find that about 50 percent of owners read the handbook and try to understand the technology of the radio," a German VW engineer told me a few months back. "Then typically, they forget about three-quarters of that and just use the familiar controls, such as volume, tuner and tape/CD select."

"A large percentage - including most women - don't even try to understand the radio. They just stick to a couple of stations throughout the period of ownership. Only a very small percentage of all buyers really use these new features to the full."

Mind you, even if you understand them they're hard to use. Radios are complicated and - unlike with books - you can tell this from their covers.

A plethora of buttons, mostly the size of pinheads and hopelessly tiny for the typical podgy-fingered punter, are scattered over the radio face like shot from a blunderbuss. They have daffy and meaningless graphics that offer no explanations.

To make matters worse, the handbook is often just as unintelligible as the radio graphics. Their poor design is all the more amazing when you look at the pedigree of the companies that produce car radios.

"Our research shows that people want much simpler systems," says the engineering boss Wilfried Bockelmann. "They just can't be bothered trying to decipher the handbooks and they don't need or want the full range of radio functions."

I'm convinced that most people want two big knobs and a row of buttons for changing the station - just like old car radios used to have. We haven't discovered a better system."

So I asked Bockelmann



GAVIN GREEN
Buttons the size of pinheads are scattered over the radio face like shot from a blunderbuss

in the eye. Panasonic, Alpine, Sharp - they're all as bad as each other.

There have been some recent improvements, but they've been a long time coming. The Ford Ka has a radio with big buttons and Renault - long the master of radio ergonomics - now offers column stalk remote controls on all its models.

The exemplar is the new Espace, which has no radio whatsoever. It is hidden - good for deterring thieves as well as hiding an ugly piece of kit - and you tune or select stations only by the remote-control column stalks. It is brilliantly simple.

A recent visit to Skoda showed that the Czechs, once synonymous with tack, are now trying hard to make their cars as sensible and rational as possible. The new and excellent Octavia, on sale in Britain next week, is proof of the new philosophy, as are their plans with car radios.

"Our research shows that people want much simpler systems," says the engineering boss Wilfried Bockelmann. "They just can't be bothered trying to decipher the handbooks and they don't need or want the full range of radio functions."

I'm convinced that most people want two big knobs and a row of buttons for changing the station - just like old car radios used to have. We haven't discovered a better system."

So I asked Bockelmann when some car makers, including Skoda, would offer this retro style, but with modern sound quality. He wouldn't tell me (car company bosses never talk about new models), but his smile reassured me that we won't have to wait for long.

Sony, for my money, is one of the world's great industrial designers. Look at its logo (so simple yet elegant, modified only minimally since its first use in 1957) and at its products, such as the Camcorder, children's tape machines, Playstation and Walkman.

And then look at its typi-

cally messy car radios, full of tiny, incomprehensible buttons that are about as easy to push as poking a fly.

And so to the car radios, full of tiny, incomprehensible buttons that are about as easy to push as poking a fly.

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Brown fields, green housing

Much-needed homes are increasingly being built on derelict land rather than on green-field sites. By Mary Wilson

It takes a courageous house-builder to turn an ugly duckling of a site into a beautiful development of new homes. With contamination problems to contend with plus demolition and clearing, it takes several months before they can start building. And that takes no account of the extra expenses involved, including the landfill taxes that have to be paid.

Morris Homes, which builds in the north west of England, has been taking on difficult sites for 30 years. "We have done loads of unattractive sites - former collieries, derelict hospitals, railway sidings. We did one of those next door to Aintree racecourse," says Martin Edmunds, the land director.

"This sort of development accounts for around 60 per cent of what we do. It is all very well for the Government to be pressing the issue of building on brown-field sites, but it depends where you are. Up here around Blackburn, Bury and Manchester, an area that has a history of industrial dereliction, there are plenty of sites, although not everyone wants to tackle them. In more rural counties, the situation is more difficult."

The company is currently working on a seven-acre site in Bury. This was a former cotton mill, which was more recently used by a plastics company. It was pretty dilapidated, although still in use, and stood in the middle of a residential area.

When Morris Homes put in its application, the planners threw their hands up in horror.

"It is a valuable employment site," they said, "and not allocated for housing." But since the plastics company was relocating, Morris Homes managed to persuade the planners that redevelopment would be a good idea.

"Our application got through straight away. The politicians and locals were delighted. The factory had been pumping out horrible fumes and everyone wanted to get rid of it," says Mr Edmunds. The three- and four-bedroom houses at Millbrook, to be built behind the old mill pond, are on the market at between £55,000 and £195,000.

Earlier this year Leach Homes acquired part of an old farmyard, which was being used as a haulage depot, at Aspenden, north of Hertford.

"This was quite grotty," says John James, the managing director. "There were old coke stumps, an oil pit and old buildings with corrugated iron roofs. There was quite a lot of demolition, and some of the buildings were infested with rats."

It took three months for the company to clear the site, going full pelt. They had to use massive cranes and huge containers to carry all the rubbish away, including the timbers, which are not allowed to be burnt.

The site backs on to farmland and sits right opposite the village green, where cricket is played and fetes are held, so the village was delighted that it was being brought into proper use," says James.

Five four-bedroom detached houses are being built, clustered around a duck pond, which the company is creating and into which the rain water will drain. The houses will be priced at £225,000 each.

Another classic ugly duckling site is Sovereign Farm, on the edge of Burwash Common, East Sussex. This was previously a chicken pro-



It takes imagination to see beautiful homes where ugly sites now exist. But some developers have that vision

cessing plant, and had stood derelict since 1990. The concrete-slabbed site consisted of a number of unsightly pre-fab buildings and outhouses. It is now being transformed by Millwood Designer Homes into a small development of five timber-framed homes.

The company has installed a bio-friendly sewage system and has planted 1,400 trees and shrubs to enhance the site further. The five-bedroom houses are priced at between £50,000 and £55,000.

Berkeley Homes, in Kent, has recently undertaken to redevelop two

dilapidated sites. Hildenbrook Farm used to be a run-down hospital within a residential area surrounded by green belt. "It was quite out of character, an eyesore for the area," says David Rick, the sales director.

The local authority had quite a lot of input into the styling of the new development, which will have a farm feel about it, and the 31 homes - a combination of large apartments, cottages and detached properties - are priced at from £175,000

to £1.2m.

The second site is opposite Can-

terbury West station, a large area of derelict buildings and wasteland. "It was an old goods yard, full of rubble and overgrown vegetation, and the whole desolate area is being rejuvenated," says Rick. Berkeley is building 250 homes at St Dunstan's Gate, ranging from apartments to four-bedroom houses. Prices will range from £65,000 to £120,000.

In Yeading, Middlesex, Barratt Homes has just bought a piece of industrial land that was once owned by British Telecom. On the six-acre site are large, unattractive warehouses beside a large expanse of

concrete, through which weeds are growing prolifically.

The site overlooks a Thames Water reservoir on one side and protected scrub land on the other and is close to a marina on the Grand Union canal. Arundel Fields will consist of 104 two- and three-bedroom houses for open market sale, plus 36 more for rent through a local housing association. Prices are expected to start at £120,000.

The vast majority of Barratt's building work in London and the South-east now takes place on recycled land, with former uses rang-

ing from factories to industrial yards.

"We aim to provide high-quality, value-for-money homes, where we can recycle redundant and non-attractive industrial land and have a positive effect on the local environment and property values," says David Pretty, chairman of Barratt Southern.

Morris Homes, 01942 272020; Leach Homes, 01920 822200; Millwood Homes, 01732 770951; Berkeley Homes (Kent), 01593 561499; Barratt Homes, 0181 607 1919.

How to overcome the probate property pitfalls

A house can prove a headache as well as a windfall if you are left one in a will.
By Ginetta Vedrickas

THE SIGNS are there: an overgrown garden, peeling paintwork and a lifetime of "treasures". Someone dies and their house goes up for sale, a beacon for bargain-hunting buyers. But one person's bargain is often someone else's headache.

Peter Bateman's elderly father died recently, leaving him with a large, dilapidated 1830s semi on the outskirts of Birmingham. Peter is an only child and, as executor and sole beneficiary in his father's "clear and brief" will, has decided to sell: "It's a huge family house where I grew up and went to school, but I could never move back."

Peter lives in London. Has distance complicated matters? "There have been lots of practical things to sort out, like bills and services, so I'm now very intimate with the M6. I searched the house for dad's old papers and deeds which I finally found under the bed. But it's hard tackling the legal stuff when you're in an emotional state."

Legally Peter must have the house and all assets valued for grant of probate, the process of proving a will's validity, and was advised by his solicitor to use a reputable agency. He chose a local agent to value the house and paid £20 plus VAT, which is deducted if Peter instructs the agent, although there is no obligation.

What happened when Peter got his valuation six weeks later? "I had to swear an oath before an independent solicitor. It was supposed to be deadly serious, but it was Dickensian. He virtually banged a hammer and barked 'that will be £7 sir'."



There's no place like home, but even the most dilapidated probate property will sell if it is in the right area

He cautions against leaving prop-

erty empty, particularly in winter months, because of burst pipes or squatters: "Assets quickly become liabilities and insurance may not cover damage. You could do better taking the money and investing elsewhere."

How easy are probate properties to sell? "It depends how ghastly they are. Many are older and perhaps not over-decorated, but buyers like not having to strip out unnecessary

stuff. If it's the worst house in the best road there should be no trouble selling."

Jeremy advises sending unwanted furniture to auction, employing a contract cleaning firm, and cutting grass to "amble rather than chest height" to show properties in their best light. "I once found what should have been a spacious Victorian front room stacked from ceiling to floor with newspapers, you couldn't even get in," he says.

Paul Tolliday and Julia Bolland fell in love with an architect-designed home left by an "eccentric" elderly woman who had died. They bought it before selling their old house. "It was a bargain and extremely unusual for Lincolnshire," says Paul.

Mortgage consultant Paul and Julia's purchase was swift, but their sale wasn't, leaving them with a problem. "We took out a bridging loan and had to rent out our old house. It was hard watching a cher-

ished home getting shabby," says Paul remembering his ex-tenants: "A dolly bird who looked immaculate, but hated housework" and "two ladies who treated the place like a doos-house."

The house eventually sold four years later costing Paul and Julia £10,000 on their loan. Would Paul do the same again? "No, but we love our house. The windows are all different shapes and there's an enormous skylight running the length of the

kitchen." Why was this house cheap? "I think sellers of probate properties become greedy, they just want to get their hands on the money quick," he adds.

Paul and Julia are happy and the purchasing price compensated for additional expenses, but family relationships frequently complicate sales. Sally, Helen and James are beneficiaries to their mother's estate, a cottage in Chislehurst, Kent, which Sally and Helen want to sell, but which James wants to buy, at the right price.

"James doesn't have his own property so feels he deserves the house," says Sally. "While he was travelling Helen and I worked hard and both own flats, but we want the money from the house to improve our properties. We don't mind James buying us out, at market value," she adds.

Probate may be challenged if you sell property within the year for less than its valuation, although Caroline Sherry says this is rare. Challenges could occur if a house sells for substantially more, but this seems inevitable in a rising market, particularly if the process is lengthy.

Sally, Helen and James are still wrangling and a council tax demand has prompted the latest dispute. "The house was exempt for six months from the date of probate, but now we must pay 50 per cent because it's been longer. If James won't get his finger out he should pay," says Sally.

Glazer Delmar: 0171 6398801; Galloway: 0181 7666111.

Beware the bogus vendor

There are house sellers who have no intention of exchanging contracts. By Penny Jackson

THERE ARE buyers at this very moment who are about to learn that the property they have fallen in love with, had surveyed and offered the full price on, is no longer for sale.

They probably had no inkling that the delightful couple who showed them round never had any intention of selling. For sellers, the game can be cost free and repeated at any time because few estate agents will risk turning them down.

So it is that fantasy buyers who get a thrill from stringing vendors along also have their mirror image.

Jonathan Crellin, of Lane Fox estate agents, knows this all too well. For three years, he had been on the verge of taking instructions for a lovely country house in Buckinghamshire. Eventually, particulars were taken, followed by another year's silence. Finally, 18 months after that, the brochure was printed and the green light given.

Some 50 people were shown around and the interest had pushed the price up by 10 per cent. A bidding war was looming. Until that is, Crellin's wife returned from a local

function with bad news. "A woman had been talking about all the people interested in her house and who the agent was," he recalls.

"Then apparently she laughed and said, 'But of course we are not really going to move, we are just testing the market'. There had been a few signs - feeble excuses for not being there or making up their minds about something. In the end, I let them off the hook. One day they might sell and you have to travel in hope."

It's an occupational hazard for agents to be used as a free valuation service, but the contact usually ends there. While the serial fantasy sellers may find themselves on a blacklist, they are rarely shown the door.

The elderly and the lonely find the excitement of selling worth all the inconvenience - they positively welcome people tramping around their home. Peter Young, of John D Wood's Kensington office, is used to excited telephone calls. "It becomes a total entertainment. They want to discuss in detail how we are getting

on. Then suddenly when an offer is made they panic because they don't know where they are going to go. It took us six years to sell one elderly client's house."

For all but the most dedicated practitioners of subterfuge, mention of marketing costs focuses the mind and many estate agencies insist on a refund of marketing costs should a seller pull out.

Foreigners, it seems, can be the worst offenders. Peter Young is currently dealing with an American who has suddenly gone cold on the idea of selling. "For the past six months, I have put a huge amount of work into getting the price he wanted and now he is asking, 'I am considering invoking the penalty clause if he doesn't go ahead.'

He is not alone in pointing the finger abroad. William Gething of Property Vision, the buying agency at the top of the market, finds the higher the price the more likely you are to get bogus sellers. "London is full of these people and foreigners who do not live here full time are the worst culprits. They go to a dinner party and hear wild stories about prices and call the agent the next day saying, 'If you can get x for my house I'm a seller'. He usually wants a great deal more than the house is worth and if it's 30 to 40 per cent more, he's on an ego trip and wasting everyone's time."

So can nervous buyers do their own detective work? Dithering divorces are certainly worth being wary about. The possible sale of their property becomes a catalyst



For every buyer wanting to look round a house, there's a seller in need of an ego boost

for their faltering marriage and just before offers are accepted they will kiss and make up and the house is snatched from under the buyers' noses, according to Brian D'Arcy Clark, of Chesterfield. "There have even been a couple of famous cases where the bogus seller has sold quickly and well, but didn't own the property in the first place," he adds.

Alan Gottschalk of Black Horse Agencies, which has a no-sell, no-fee policy, says you should be inquisitive without interrogating the seller. "There was nothing we wanted to buy. When we dropped out, our purchaser increased his offer substantially. We felt dreadful and offered to pay the purchaser's legal fees of £250."

Her buyer would have had no indication that this would happen: "We had even got together a seller's package to speed things along. We should have looked around first, but at the time you were not considered a serious purchaser unless your own house was on the market."

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How to tempt a tenant out



Photomontage by Jonathan Anstee

Someone renting a property agreed to help his landlord sell it and ended up earning himself a commission that would make most estate agents drool. Robert Liebman investigates

For homeowners seeking to sell a tenanted property, the best advice in town often appears to be the only advice: first obtain vacant possession. With short-term leases prevailing today, landlords can afford to wait.

Dennis Woodman had a different idea. More accurately his tenant did. The tenant suggested that, if Mr Woodman were to give him an inducement to vacate, he would gladly go.

A decade ago, such suggestions usually led to extortionate amounts of money changing hands. With property prices skyrocketing, landlords and tenants alike joined the welcome buyers. He had the motivation to be a good salesman."

The agreement was formal, in writing, drafted by Mr Woodman, polished by his solicitor, and revised after the tenant's solicitor raised his own points. It covered many issues including VAT, the complex sliding-scale reimbursement arrangement, and reasonable notice to quit.

During the winter the house attracted few viewers. But when Mr

who can wrap you around their fingers."

The "for sale" sign went up in September last year. "I was to give him a fixed sum if the house sold by the new year, and the amount dropped every month if the house wasn't sold, from the start of the agreement. The agreement expired after 12 months." The formula was complex, allowing for improvements made by the tenant. A quick sale would have netted the tenant £20,000. In the event he received nearly the full amount. "It ensured the house would be in good order, looked after, and running with a fresh feel to it. Instead of being surly, he would welcome buyers. He had the motivation to be a good salesman."

The agreement was formal, in writing, drafted by Mr Woodman, polished by his solicitor, and revised after the tenant's solicitor raised his own points. It covered many issues including VAT, the complex sliding-scale reimbursement arrangement, and reasonable notice to quit.

During the winter the house attracted few viewers. But when Mr

Woodman lopped nearly £20,000 off the asking price in early spring a buyer was found. It was one thing for Mr Woodman to have confidence in his unusual arrangement, but with vacant possession in particular, sellers' solicitors are profoundly paranoid.

"We had to reassure the seller's solicitor, which we did with good

inconsequential wrinkle occurred when the house attracted a second offer. If a bidding war had erupted, the tenant's interests (to get a quick sale) and those of the seller (hold out for a higher price) easily could have clashed. "That never happened. This arrangement worked because of good faith," Mr Woodman asserts.

'Giving the tenant an incentive meant that instead of being surly, he welcomed buyers and was motivated to be a good salesman'

faith. The buyer had to make a judgement regarding my tenant. The buyer's solicitor would have got a nod and wink from my solicitor that the tenant was getting a cut."

Vacant possession based on such financial agreements are not for everyone and are not watertight, either legally or emotionally.

An unexpected and ultimately

In addition to staying put when the lease specifies that they should move out, obstructive tenants restrict viewing hours, intentionally keep a messy house, and talk down the property, the neighbours and the neighbourhood.

Sitting tenants have strong rights and usually can be shifted only with a healthy payoff, admits Neil Chand-

ler, senior negotiator with East End estate agents Land & Co. "But with shorthold tenants, we encourage landlords to reduce the rent to encourage the tenant to be co-operative and helpful."

Jonathan Crellin of Lane Fox

says that the majority of landlord-tenant arrangements he has encountered in nearly 20 years as an estate agent involved straight pay-offs to tenants for vacant possession.

But he recalls one particularly adroit and amicable deal: "The tenant lived in what had been his parents' house on a Gloucestershire estate, and he stayed on after they died. We knew that if we tried to force a sale, he would go for a sitting tenancy."

"We calculated that with vacant possession, the property was worth about £90,000, and without it, about £50,000. We also thought that the tenant, who had a young family, wanted to own his own property". They calculated the value of the kind of house that interested him, and in exchange for vacant possession, paid a 15 per cent deposit for him. "If the tenant is young enough, you can

usually get them on your side," says Mr Crellin.

Solicitor Leslie Dubow of the Solicitors' Property Group prefers vacant possession, "but something I frequently do is to get the tenant to sign an agreement that they would vacate by a certain date, or by completion."

The tenant still might stay put, but "if they signed such an agreement, you could sue the pants off them, and they wouldn't have any defence," says Dubow. Legal Aid wouldn't come to their rescue either: "you only get legal aid if you had a case. We would argue [to the Legal Aid Board] that they signed an agreement and we relied on it. What possible argument could the tenants make?"

The landlord clearly gains if the tenant signs an agreement to vacate. But "if they refuse to sign, you worry," says Dubow.

Land & Co. can be reached on 0171 729 1815; Solicitors' Property Group on 01707 87 32 17; Lane Fox on 01844 342571.



PENNY JACKSON
Wimbledon is where it's at for celebrity living

FOR A Wimbledon developer hoping for overseas buyers, who better than a top tennis player to lure them into SW19?

Pathfinder Properties is turning a British Telecom building into smart apartments. As it turns out, the flats, with membership of a health club, are selling without a tennis racket in sight. Just as well since the kind of money top players expect for this sort of arrangement can knock a nasty hole in advertising budgets.

According to James Mercer of ProServe, whose clients include Greg Rusedski and Petr Korda, property deals are more common in the United States. "If a player is putting a name behind some beautiful apartments where he or she would like to live, and the deal is over something like a three-year term it could mean a free apartment at the end of it."

The very minimum association would not be less than £20,000, but it is more likely to be several hundred thousand. Wimbledon Central prices for two-bedroom apartments start at £234,000.

STILL IN Wimbledon, the great holiday exodus is underway as owners make the most of tennis lettings. If there is no answer from friends at this time, the chances are they are something like £1,500 a week better off for not being there.

On the other hand, Joanna Doniger of Tennis London, who arranges lets, is more likely to be swabbing down their floors. Apparently as soon as the owners clear out with their pets, the neighbouring cats make the most of unguarded territory.

"I have had a terrible time clearing up cat mess for the past few days," she says. Animals are also responsible for the superfast exit of some players from their temporary homes: "A player with an allergy can be suffering within minutes."

If it's not pets it's washing machines. "I have two plumbers sorting out problems for distressed players who can't wash their whites."

Not all owners will be lucky enough to let. But it appears that anyone with a tennis court is on to a winner. Edward Foley of Wimbledon estate agents Robert Holmes, nearly ran into some men playing tennis in the street the other evening. It turned out to be Sampras and friends.

'They are all at each others' throats - it's very funny'

Estate agents are notoriously competitive but while some manage to get on with rivals, for most it's a dog-eat-dog world out there on the high street. Ginetta Vetricas reports

THE UGLY scenes in Marseilles may prove that conflict is endemic to football. But how about "our lads" on the high street? Are estate agents healthy competitors or deadly enemies?

"I love them all," squeals Mark Pendred, in a tone reminiscent of Larry Grayson. Mark works for independent agents John Thorogoods in Battersea's Northcote Road, where seven agents compete for business within a quarter-mile radius.

Is it a peaceful coexistence? "Everyone pushes their own strengths. Our manager's been in the business for 21 years but you get boys over the road who are there for six months and move on," Mark sniffs.

Thorogoods rely heavily upon personal recommendation, with many clients already living in the area. Mark believes the larger agencies prefer "the glossy magazine approach" which he feels works only for "things that don't sell particularly quickly" and finds rival agents try to poach clients.

"It's a bit naughty once there's a board up," says Mark. "They send letters saying: 'Dear disappointed, we see you are unable to sell your property but we can help you.' Often

we just haven't had time to get the 'under offer' board up," Mark adds wistfully. "It would be nice if there wasn't anyone else."

Joanna Watkins, manager of Chestertons' Fulham branch, thrives on rivalry but prefers to call it competition. "It's healthy and good for business." With over 30 agencies in Fulham, does she socialise with her competitors? "We're always bumping into each other so we can't help it. Everyone goes to the pub and talks business, you want to know what you're up against," says Joanna, who finds that she's built up "trust and great friendships" over the years.

But trust is the last thing on some Fulham agents' minds. One confided that he is certain a rival firm is removing their sale boards, at a cost of £10 each, and is considering hiring private detectives to catch the culprit. Has Joanna experienced this? "At the end of the day it's big business and everything happens but I've no wish to see anything like that."

Surely healthy competition turns to bitter enmity in a poor market? I ask, in a bid to get nice Joanna to say something nasty. "We go down the pub and have a good moan," is the worst she will admit to. Chestertons operate a quarterly and six monthly

incentive scheme to encourage negotiations and give vouchers to top performers. Joanna believes effort is an investment "which gets you noticed in the company" but a particular quality is vital: "If you are hungry you will make a lot of money and we only want hungry negotiators."

Does David Parkin, an experienced surveyor, see much evidence of trust and friendship? "They're all at each others' throats, it's very funny," he says. "We often value somewhere and look for recent, comparable sales in the area. We approach other agents but they frequently give us duff information to kill a sale."

David finds that some agents are extremely competitive and try to mislead him to scupper rival sales. "Sometimes they think I'm from out of town and, in hilly areas like Crystal Palace, I have been told that certain properties won't be able to get insurance. This backfires alarmingly when it's their sale," adds David.

Steve Smith, manager of Bushells' Dulwich branch, is benevolent towards competitors but has warned younger, inexperienced negotiators: "We're not at war."

The battle lines look clearly

drawn on Dulwich's Lordship Lane. While sitting in Steve's office I watch a rival agent cross the road in an attempt to avoid looking in Bushells' window. But how do agents know what the competition is selling and, more importantly, at what price? "I'd be surprised if at least four of our competitors were not on the mailing list," he says.

Steve Smith agrees that vendors can get caught in the crossfire: "Established agents act properly but there are sharper agents who do not perceive the long term view." A senior negotiator was surely only considering the short term when he - allegedly - punched a junior from his own branch and you may shortly read further details of this shaming example of competition when the case comes to court.

Rivalry does not always result in a legal battle or a fist-fight. A recent television programme featured a Streatham agency manager who likened his two negotiators to Rottweilers. The programme was shown and the agency was deluged with dog biscuits - proving that it's a dog-eat-dog world on the high street.

This tacit agreement is not always straightforward and vendors could receive two bills. One agent describes a case that has gone wrong: "We showed a client a prop-

erty and he liked it but couldn't decide. He later approached another agency who was also marketing it and made the offer through them but they refuse to split the fee."

The first agency has lost out and so has the vendor. "We made the introduction and will continue to chase them for our fee," says the agent.

Steve Smith agrees that vendors can get caught in the crossfire: "Established agents act properly but there are sharper agents who do not perceive the long term view." A senior negotiator was surely only considering the short term when he - allegedly - punched a junior from his own branch and you may shortly read further details of this shaming example of competition when the case comes to court.

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John Thorogoods: 0171 2287474; Bushells: 0181 2991722.



Painting minus the pain

Getting the decorators in needn't be a nightmare.

By Fiona Brandhorst

A recent survey shows that employing a decorator is only slightly less worrying than taking your car to the garage, asking for a bank loan or getting the builders in. At the best dinner parties, horror stories abound of paint-splattered houses, mis-matched patterns and unfinished jobs. Valerie Hind, who has had a series of decorators at her London home, admits to "lying in bed worrying how it's going to turn out". Her first experience was of a young Irish decorator who spent ages covering his dreadlocked hair only to spray everything but his head in paint. "He offered to take £50 off the bill to pay for cleaning my new sofa," says Valerie. "I was so fed up I just accepted, but it was ruined."

Tony, recommended by a friend, sticks in my mind. For exterior work he was a "pure professional" even painting drainpipes and door steps without charging extra. However, inside, his skills were rather less apparent. He used paint sparingly, and was more likely to dunk his biscuit in a cup of tea than dip his brush in the paint tin, leaving his own style of paint effects on the stairwell. His piece de resistance was flooding the hall when he tried to unhang the radiator. Tony wanted cash in hand, no questions asked. Nigel on the other hand, seemed more professional, that is, he charged VAT. However, he not only bunged embossed paper upside down, but also con-

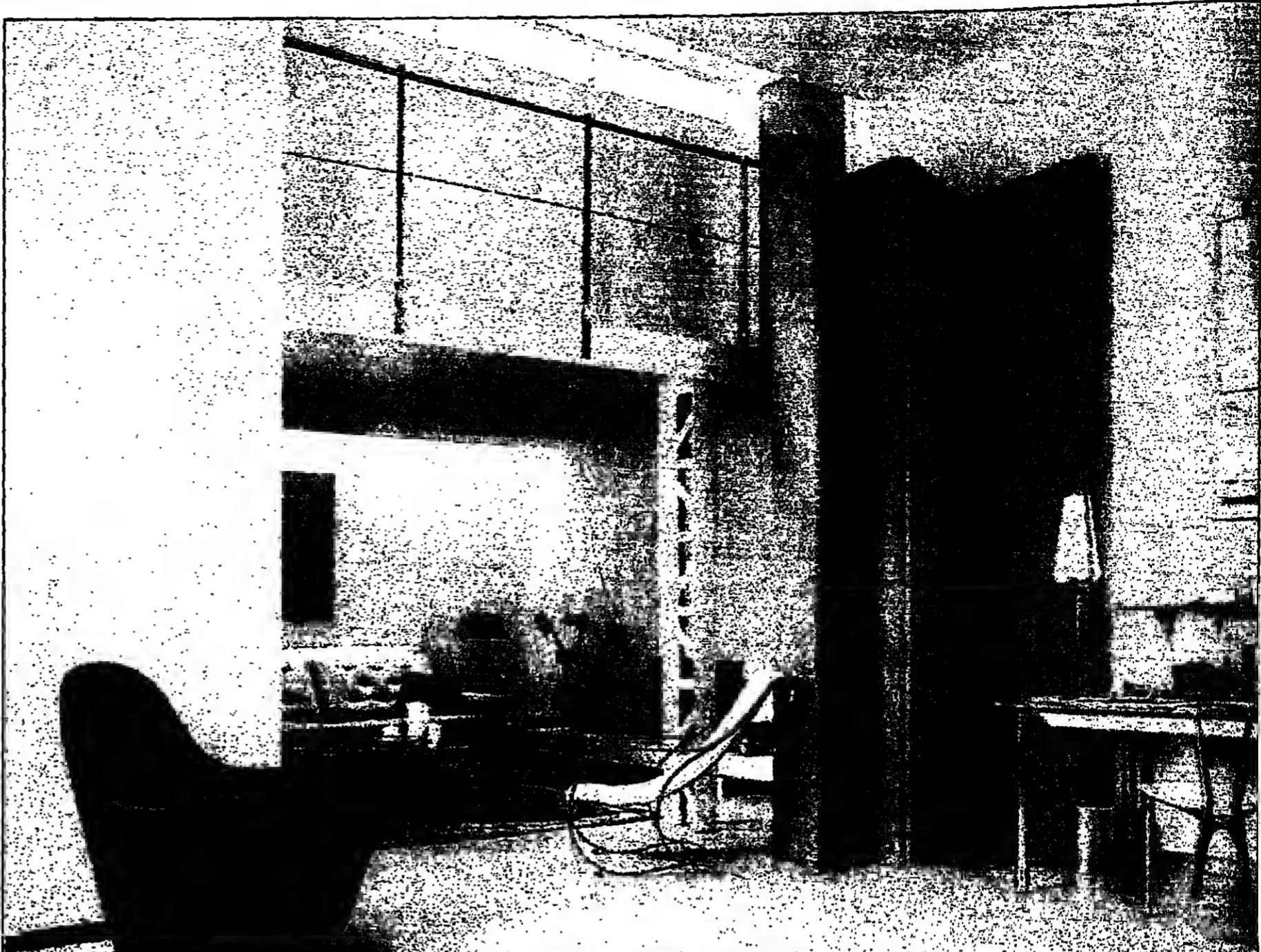
vinced me it could hang either way.

Another decorator, who prefers to remain anonymous, pre-empts situations like this by telling clients his cautionary tale about the woman who made him paint her kitchen walls three times until she was happy. It usually works. No one wants to appear as pernickety as her.

However, it would be unfair to suggest that everyone's experience of decorators is a bad one. Cathy and Andy Woosley employ a painter and decorator who is "just superb". Recommended to them by the builder who fitted their kitchen, Peter the Painter, as he's now called, has been working his way round their Victorian terrace in south London. "He has such a professional approach," says Cathy. "He's tidy and works really hard, and he's also good company." When the Woosleys moved in just over three years ago, they had great plans and no children. "We didn't enjoy the boring bits of decorating like the preparing," says Cathy. "And once we'd had the children we realised we'd rather pay someone to get it done and do a better job."

Cathy didn't get other quotes before giving Peter the work. "I checked with a friend to see what she'd paid someone else to do a similar job and it seemed on a par." Peter is a former musician who found he could make more money out of paint, hasn't had to advertise; Cathy has already recommended him to friends.

Dulux's Select Decorator Service appears to be trying to bridge



The Dulux Select scheme guarantees any work by decorators on the books - providing they use at least some Dulux paint

the gap between employing a decorator through informal recommendations and having to respond blind to a small ad in the Yellow Pages. Homeowners are put in touch with decorators recommended, approved and guaranteed by ICI Dulux. Paul Hayward from Dulux says, "We're only interested in decorators who are serious about their profession. There's a strict vetting procedure including site visits to jobs in hand and at least three references are sought from homeowners, as well as checks

at the decorator's supplier to ensure they run a good account." Smoking on the job will earn a potential member a black mark.

It's a free service for consumers who are asked when and what kind of work is required when they call the information line and if any special paint effects are needed. The adviser finds a member in the area and checks their availability and willingness to carry out the job.

The big selling point is that ICI Paints will "guarantee the work

carried out by a member for 12 months from the date of completion" provided "any liquid surface coating used" is from the Dulux trade range or an approved substitute.

So what if you want to use wallpaper or specialist paints? "As long as the main paint areas are Dulux you're covered," says Mr Hayward.

"We'd rectify any wallpaper problems if the product was faulty. But if none of the products are Dulux we can only recommend the decorator." And that means you'll

lose the workmanship guarantee. Members, who are charged an annual fee of £195, have to give customers a fair and competitive price that includes VAT and no hidden extras. Mr Hayward agrees that a Select decorator may be more expensive, but the price quoted is the one you pay".

Homeowners are free to compare quotes with other tradesmen of their choice and members will be removed from the scheme if they are found to be overcharging. The cus-

tomer benefits from a conciliation and arbitration service and a deposit protection scheme.

Fewer than 2 per cent of Select decorators are women but the number is growing as are requests from consumers for women decorators. Search the small ads in family-targeted publications and you'll find "child friendly" decorators and "gentleman builders". Niche marketing is alive and well.

Dulux Select Decorator: 0345 697668

TEL: 0171 293 2222

PROPERTY: LONDON

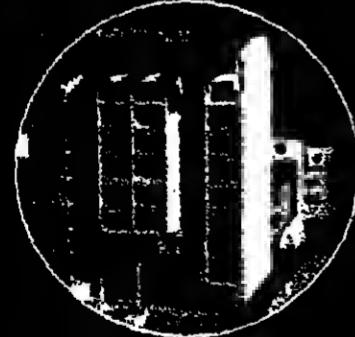
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